

The Schism in the Methodist  
Church, 1844

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# The Schism in the Methodist Episcopal Church 1844:

A Study of Slavery and Ecclesiastical Politics

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BY

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Published by Alfred University  
The Alfred Press, Alfred, N. Y.  
1923

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ALFRED UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
VOLUME I



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## PREFACE

The original plan of this work contemplated tracing the disruptive influence of slavery in all the churches, but as the work progressed and a need was perceived to limit its scope, the study was confined to that church which, of them all, was most severely torn by the slavery conflict. The experiences of the other churches also present problems deserving of study, but their problems differ from those of the Methodists. The Catholic and the Protestant Episcopal churches had strong organizations, but they lacked the emotional element to which the radical abolitionist movement most appealed. The Presbyterian and Baptist churches possessed the requisite emotional element, but they lacked the strong national organization. The Methodist Episcopal Church combined both factors; it had the proper material for an emotional appeal to act upon, and it had a well-knit polity. In it were united explosive material and rigid structure. The result was that while other denominations had suffered in slavery struggles, nowhere was the issue so clear-cut or the outcome so destructive to the historic church as among the Methodists.

The disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church is a conspicuous incident in that great drama of American History, with slavery in the center of the stage, which preceded, and produced, the Civil War. Regarded not merely as a theme in ecclesiastical history, but as a proper field for the secular historian, a study of the Methodist schism should reveal its significance for the political and social life of the time, and help us to determine to what extent Clay and Calhoun and Web-

ster were right in their judgment of the effect that a division of the churches must have upon the continuance of political unity in the nation. It should bring out, too, many suggestive parallels with the political secession that was eventually attempted. The rise of radical abolitionism in the political field is faithfully reflected in the ecclesiastical story; the stormy scenes in the national legislature find their match in the sessions of the General Conferences of 1836, 1840 and 1844; as the Civil War was precipitated by the determination of the South to carry slavery into the territories, thus securing both vindication and political weight, while the North was equally determined to keep them free from slavery, so the Methodist schism was made inevitable by the entrance of slavery into the episcopacy, the South being determined that it should stay there, both as justification and as a source of power, with the North equally determined that it should not. The same quarrels over constitutional interpretation, the same charges that the whole trouble arose from the evil designs of a few leading conspirators, the same inability on each side to understand the opposing point of view, the same division into northern radicals, southern radicals, and moderates, in short the same intense sectionalism appeared in the ecclesiastical as in the political crisis. The church crisis is, indeed, the political crisis in miniature. And it is more. For the church proceeded to an actual Plan of Separation, an agreement to let the South set up ecclesiastically for itself. The consequent quarrels over the boundary line and the division of the church property suggest by analogy some of the possible consequences of Confederate success. And it may be that the ecclesiastical border struggle in western Virginia, by intensifying sectionalism within the Old Dominion helped to pave the way for the erection of a new state when the civil conflict burst forth.



The psychological side of the denominational controversy also has received attention. The way that well-meaning, earnest-minded, religious men conduct themselves in tense and trying circumstances is a source of unending interest to those who enjoy the study of human nature. The inevitableness of the division, the impossibility of moving in any direction at the General Conference of 1844 without damaging some great interest and dividing the church, placed good men in a fearful dilemma. On the whole, and we are glad to say it, they acquitted themselves as became their standing and profession.

The problem here studied bristles with moot questions. The writer has not hesitated to express his own judgment on men and measures, but no one realizes more fully than he, that all of the questions are two-sided at least, and that another, using the same materials might come to different conclusions. He hopes that the materials here embodied may aid the reader in correcting those errors of judgment which the writer must unavoidably have permitted to creep into his work. Throughout, a lively and charitable appreciation of the tremendous difficulties which faced the men prominent in these controversies has been allowed to mellow any harsh criticisms that may have come to mind. Certainly naught has been set down in malice.

In the production of this study a mass of newspaper and pamphlet material has been used which, it is believed, was never before utilized for a similar purpose. The prominent Methodist weeklies, especially "The Christian Advocate and Journal" (now "The Christian Advocate"), "The Richmond Christian Advocate" and the "Advocates" published at Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Charleston, Nashville and elsewhere, together with "Zion's Herald," "Zion's Watchman," the

May Collection of Anti-Slavery Pamphlets in the Cornell University Library, and the extensive collection of pamphlets, periodicals, documents and general works in the Drew Theological Seminary Library at Madison, New Jersey, furnished the chief sources of this work. The only previous book that has made large use of the church newspapers in dealing with the same topic is Charles Elliott's "The Great Secession." Prepared under the authority of the General Conference, as an official account of the events from the standpoint of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is in reality a documentary history of the schism by one of the chief participants, consisting largely of newspaper clippings with some analysis of, and running comment upon, the same.

The author wishes to express his appreciation of the assistance given him in a multitude of ways by Professors Charles H. Hull and Julian P. Bretz of Cornell University under whose guidance the work has been brought to completion, and by Professors Claude H. VanTyne, and Frederic L. Paxon (then a colleague of Professor VanTyne at the University of Michigan), who watched over the earlier stages of the task. The author cannot speak too highly of the kindly consideration and courteous assistance he received at the hands of Samuel G. Ayres, then Librarian at Drew Theological Seminary (now Librarian at Garrett Biblical Institute), where the bulk of these investigations was made. Thanks also are due to the authorities at the libraries of Cornell University and the University of Michigan, the Detroit Public Library, the Methodist Book Concern at Cincinnati, the State Library at Charleston, W. Va., the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library and the New England Methodist Historical Society Library in Boston for their help. Finally he must not forget the painstaking

work as a copyist performed by Mr. Lloyd R. Watson of Alfred, N. Y., to whose careful investigations also are due many features, and the first complete draft, of the map.

This work was accepted by the faculty of the graduate school of Cornell University as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

J. NELSON NORWOOD.

Alfred, N. Y., February 10, 1923.



## Chapter I

### EARLY METHODISM AND SLAVERY

The Methodists have always and justly considered their church a pioneer anti-slavery institution. John Wesley, its founder and early leader, together with most of his associates, was outspoken in his denunciation of slavery and this original bias was a powerful influence in shaping the policy and sentiments of the rising denomination. In his "Thoughts upon Slavery," written in 1774, Wesley struck "at the root of this complicated villany," denying that slavery could be in any degree consistent with natural justice. He placed man-buyers on a level with man-stealers, and called on God to pity the poor down-trodden blacks.<sup>1</sup> In 1787, writing encouragingly to the newly formed Abolition Committee, he expressed the hope that it would attack not merely the slave trade, its prime object, but also "the shocking abomination of slavery" itself.<sup>2</sup> Only a few days before his death, he wrote Wilberforce, rejoicing in the glorious enterprise of destroying the execrable villany, which he characterized as the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. "Go on" . . . , he added with emphasis, "till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish before it."<sup>3</sup>

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1 Wesley, "Thoughts Upon Slavery," "Works," (First American Complete and Standard Edition), VI. 286, 292, 293.

2 Clarkson, "Hist. of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," II. 63.

3 Tyerman, "J. Wesley," III. 650.

The good Dr. Coke, one of the first bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was in full sympathy with the anti-slavery views of his chief, and got himself into trouble in America by his outspoken references to the subject in the pulpit and in private conversation.<sup>4</sup>

Like-minded was Bishop Francis Asbury, as may readily be seen from his interesting "Journal." In 1776 he wrote, "After preaching at the Point, I met the class, and then met some black people, some of whose unhappy masters forbid their coming for religious instruction. How will the sons of oppression answer for their conduct when the great Proprietor of all shall call them to account!"<sup>5</sup> Four years later this entry occurs, "I spoke to some select friends about slave-keeping, but they could not bear it: this I know, God will plead the cause of the oppressed, though it gives offence to say so here. O Lord, banish the infernal spirit of slavery from thy dear Zion."<sup>6</sup> Freeborn Garrettson, one of the first and ablest native American Methodist preachers, was born and brought up in slave territory. Though for a time a slaveholder himself, he became so impressed with the wickedness of slaveholding that he liberated all his blacks, and was known thereafter as a strong anti-slavery advocate.<sup>7</sup>

Such was the spirit of the men<sup>8</sup> who molded the life of this virile young church. Other forces aided them. A new spirit was abroad in the world. Anti-slavery fitted admirably with the humanitarian feeling that accompanied the era of political revolutions. The

4 Drew, "Coke," 138-41.

5 "Journal," I. 187, (June 23).

6 "Ibid.," 374, (June 4, 1780).

7 N. Bangs, "Life of Garrettson," 34.

8 Rev. George Whitefield was an exception among these early leaders. He bought slaves for the benefit of his Georgia orphanage. Tyerman, "Whitefield," II. 169.

inconsistency of claiming natural rights for the white man while denying them to the black man was bound to be appreciated more and more, especially by Americans.<sup>9</sup> The Methodists personified the new spirit.

Early Methodist immigrants appeared in America between 1763 and 1776. Two centers of activity were established at about the same time—one in Maryland, and the other in New York City.<sup>10</sup> As the work grew, Mr. Wesley was appealed to for direction and counsel. A definite organization was evolving and the first formal conference of American Methodist preachers was held in Philadelphia (1773)<sup>11</sup>. In spite of the strong feeling of the leaders, and partly perhaps because the people were not ready for it, no action on slavery was taken before the Baltimore conference held in April, 1780. Its minutes contain, in the familiar catechetical style of primitive Methodism, a vigorous declaration on slavery as follows:—

“Quest. 16. Ought not this Conference to require those travelling preachers who hold slaves to give promises to set them free?”

“Yes.

“Quest. 17. Does this Conference acknowledge that slavery is contrary to the laws of God, man, and nature, and hurtful to society; contrary to the dictates of conscience and pure religion, and doing that which we would not others should do to us and ours? Do

9 Locke, “Anti-Slavery in America...1619-1808,” 1-2.

This feeling showed itself in the wave of opposition to the continuation of the slave trade, and in the emancipatory laws enacted in the North where slavery had its weakest economic hold. “Ibid.,” 74-80 and chap. V.

10 For discussion of these beginnings see Wakeley, “Lost Chapters,” 34-36.

11 “Minutes of the Annual Conferences,” I. 5.

we pass our disapprobation on all our friends who keep slaves, and advise their freedom?

“Yes.”<sup>12</sup>

In 1783 a conference dealt particularly with the local preachers. They were to be faithfully warned, with the intimation that at the next conference it might be necessary to suspend the recalcitrant slaveholders among them.<sup>13</sup> Equally advanced was the action taken at the spring meeting in 1784. It dealt both with the preachers and with private members. If Methodists bought slaves to hold and use, they might be expelled after due warning, and under no circumstances could they be permitted to sell slaves. The local preachers in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, who would not free their slaves when they could legally do so, were to be suspended, while the local preachers of Virginia were to be given another year in which to comply. Traveling preachers refusing to comply with the rules were to be employed no longer.<sup>14</sup>

The year 1784 marked an epoch in the history of American Methodism aside from the slavery question. The growth of the societies, together with the newly attained political separation of the colonies from Great Britain,<sup>15</sup> necessitated a more formal and complete church organization. To this end Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke as superintendent or bishop and sent him with two companions to the United States.<sup>16</sup> At the

12 “Minutes of the Annual Conferences,” I. 12.

13 “Ibid.,” I. 18.

14 “Ibid.,” I. 20, 21.

15 See Wesley’s letter, “Ibid.,” I. 21-22.

16 Drew, “Coke,” 73. Wesley’s “Journal,” VII. 15-16. (All references to Wesley’s “Journal” are to the Standard Edition). Tyerman, “J. Wesley,” III. 426-30.



famous Christmas conference in Baltimore (1784) American Methodism began its independent existence.<sup>17</sup>

With the constitutional system then set up we are not here concerned, but we are interested in the stand the conference took on slavery. A new requirement for church membership was written into the first "Discipline" or authoritative rule book of American Methodism. Every slaveholding member must within a year execute a legal instrument agreeing to free all his slaves at a time depending upon their age when the document was drawn up. Pastors must keep a record of these transactions in their respective circuits, and members must comply with the new condition within a year or withdraw from the church. Applicants must accept it before being admitted to membership. An exception, which be it said limited somewhat the sweeping character of this legislation, was made for those residing in states where manumission was prohibited by law. The declaration was still further toned down by the proviso allowing the Virginia brethren, on account of their peculiar circumstances, two years in which to accept or reject it.<sup>18</sup>

This legislation sets the high water mark of Methodist anti-slavery opposition in the early days. The trend of the church for a long time thereafter was

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17 Of course American Methodists always loyally acknowledged the leadership of John Wesley.

At this Christmas conference, Coke and Asbury were unanimously elected to the superintendency (episcopate) and Asbury was ordained. Asbury, "Journal," I. 486.

18 "Discipline" of 1785, 15-17.

These old "Disciplines" are now rare. Very few full sets are in existence. The set in the library of the New England Methodist Historical Society in Boston, counting two reprints, and the original of 1785 which belongs to Dr. Nutter, the librarian, is complete.

The set at Drew Theological Seminary Library, Madison, N. J., is nearly complete.

irregularly, but surely, away from this high standard. Although spreading more rapidly in the North than in the South in subsequent years, Methodism was stronger at the South at the time this radical stand on slavery was taken.<sup>19</sup> This fact made it especially difficult for the church to stand boldly erect on its vigorously expressed anti-slavery platform. Compromise seemed needful if peace was to be maintained and the grand purpose achieved for which the church existed, i. e., the spreading of scriptural holiness over these lands.

It is not unlikely that the rigid anti-slavery views of Wesley, Coke and Asbury were thrust, in a sense, upon an unwilling or indifferent conference. It is hinted that Wesley's plans were unfolded to the conference,<sup>20</sup> and that the decisions were arrived at hurriedly.<sup>21</sup> It is certain that the proceedings evoked energetic opposition among the laity. Both Coke and Asbury encountered bitter hostility in many localities. While preaching in a barn in Virginia in April, 1785, Dr. Coke made his audience so angry by his anti-slavery utterances that several individuals withdrew determined to do the preacher bodily harm. A fashionably dressed lady urged them on by offering a large reward if they would treat the offending minister to a hundred lashes.<sup>22</sup> Bishop Asbury referring to the same incident remarked how agitated the people were over the

19 "Minutes of the Annual Conferences," I. 20.

In 1784 about 80 per cent of the Methodists lived in Maryland, Delaware, or the states further south.

It will be noted that this anti-slavery legislation appeared near the time of the passage of the famous Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and also while many states were freeing or providing for the ultimate freeing of their slaves.

20 Drew, "Coke," 102.

21 Asbury, "Journal," I. 487. But it is also said that the general principles involved in the plans thus unfolded were approved unanimously.

22 Drew, "Coke," 138.

new rules on slavery.<sup>23</sup> Coke met with much persecution. Members withdrew from the church, houses where he had been wont to find friendly entertainment were closed to him, the assassin's bullet was levelled at him, he was indicted by a grand jury and chased by a mob.<sup>24</sup>

This violence had the desired effect,<sup>25</sup> for at a conference held early in June, 1785, less than six months after they were enacted, the objectionable rules were suspended.<sup>26</sup> This proved to mean indefinite postponement, but the friends of the negro covered their retreat by a reiteration of their abhorrence of slavery and their determination to labor for its destruction by all wise and prudent means.<sup>27</sup> It was impossible, however, to hide the fact that they had suffered a severe defeat.<sup>28</sup>

23 Asbury, "Journal," I. 495, (April 30, 1785).

He wrote, "I found the minds of the people greatly agitated with our rules against slavery. . . . Colonel——— and Dr. Coke disputed on the subject, and the Colonel used some threats: Next day brother O'Kelly let fly at them, and they were angry enough; we, however, came off with whole bones, and our business in conference was finished in peace."

24 Drew, "Coke," 142, 182-3.

25 "Ibid.," 144.

26 "Minutes of the Annual Conferences," I. 24.

27 "Ibid."

28 It is interesting to note that Mr. Wesley and his English associates and successors did not always conduct themselves as belligerently in the presence of the "evil" as their professions might lead one to expect.

In 1758 Mr. Wesley baptized a Mr. Gilbert and two of his slaves in England. He did not require that the blacks be freed, nor did he prohibit his followers in the West Indies or on the continent from holding slaves. For the baptism see Journal, IV. 247-8 (Jan. 17, '58) and 292 (Nov. 29, '58).

In 1817 English missionaries sent to the West Indies were warned that their sole business was to promote the religious and moral improvement of the blacks without interfering publicly or privately with their civil status. Scarritt, "Position of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on the subject of Slavery," 19-20.

For over ten years little was done in the conferences about slavery. The suspension of the rules of 1784 practically struck from the Discipline all reference to the subject.<sup>29</sup> Interest in the colored man took the form of zealous work for his spiritual salvation rather than for his bodily emancipation.<sup>30</sup> At the General Conference of 1796<sup>31</sup> there appeared a temporary revival of the old anti-slavery spirit. Supplemented by some acts of the succeeding Conference<sup>32</sup> it was declared that the church was more than ever convinced of the great evil of slavery, that all slaveholders obtaining official position in the church must engage to emancipate their slaves, all slaveholders seeking church membership must be spoken to by the ministers about slavery, and slave sellers must be expelled. Slave buying was to be permitted solely on condition that slave and offspring be kept in bondage for a limited time only, traveling preachers forfeited their positions at once if they refused to free their slaves in states where it was legal to do so, and annual conferences were directed to petition their state legislatures to legalize gradual emancipation where it was not already legal.<sup>33</sup>

While inferior in rigor to those of 1784, these rules betoken a new zeal after a decade of coolness. This revival may not be unrelated to the activity of the secular abolition societies which at this time (1794) began

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29 In the "Disciplines" of 1786, 1787, and 1788 there is no mention of slavery at all. It is also of interest that the rule against the use of liquor was dropped out in 1786.

30 It was about this time that the first independent negro churches arose. See Turner, "Negro in Pennsylvania," 134-135.

31 By 1796 the General Conference had been evolved, beginning with the organic legislation of 1784, and had been given the chief place in regulating the affairs of the church.

32 This Conference (1800) rejected a proposal to exclude all slaveholders from the church and thus restore the high standard of 1784. "Journals of the General Conference," I. 41.

33 "Journals of the General Conference," I. 22, 23, 40, 41, 44.

to unite in an annual convention at Philadelphia. A good deal of anti-slavery enthusiasm was thus developed, and a campaign was planned which included memorializing the state legislatures and Congress on the subject. For a dozen years the work of this convention was kept up, when a decided slackening of interest could again be observed.<sup>34</sup>

It is naturally difficult to determine just how effectively the new church rules were enforced. We get glimpses of their operation in one locality, at least, by means of some extracts from "an old smoky MS. 'Journal of the Quarterly Meeting Conference of Dorchester Circuit, Md.' " These minutes cover the period 1804-1829 and show how the rules of 1796 were enforced among the local Methodists. From the extracts it appears that at the April meeting in 1805, provision was made for the freeing of five slaves; at the March meeting 1806, ten were freed; in September, one; February 1807, six; and so on. At one meeting a member was expelled for having sold a negro for lifelong service although he pleaded ignorance of the rules. The last transaction of this nature occurred February 23, 1816, and while the book contains the minutes for thirteen years more, no emancipations are recorded.<sup>35</sup>

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34 Locke, "Anti-Slavery in America," 101. See also the "Minutes of the Proceedings" of these conventions, *passim*.

35 In Mattison, "Impending Crisis of 1860," 25-28. The following will indicate more exactly the nature of these "Minutes" and the method of doing business in the conference: "April 6, 1805,—The case of Joseph Meekins, who has purchased a negro woman and child, was considered. *Resolved*, That the said negro woman shall serve eight years, and the said boy named Ben shall serve until he is twenty-six years old. Expelled for non-compliance."

"October 1, 1808, Roger Cooper's case, who had purchased a negro man, aged 37 years, for whom he gave \$250, being submitted. *Resolved*, That the said negro may be held to serve for seven years from next Christmas."

See also the vigorous attempts to enforce the anti-slavery legislation indicated by the action of the Philadelphia conference (1810 and 1814), and quoted in the same old "Journal." "Ibid.," 31-32.

The revival of 1796 was relatively short lived. The implication of the Dorchester minutes, that the rules ceased to be enforced and that the anti-slavery spirit soon waned again, is borne out by the acts of the General Conference of 1804 and its immediate successors. In that year the enactments of 1796 and 1800 were materially weakened. The plan of memorializing state legislatures was dropped, and slave selling under certain conditions was legalized. Moreover three southern states, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia were exempted altogether from these attenuated rules, and as if to show how strongly the wind was blowing from the South, the preachers were instructed to admonish the slaves to render due respect to the commands of their masters.<sup>36</sup> What a change in tone since 1784! The practical requirements of ecclesiastical statesmanship were making inadvisable a rigid stand against the powerful interests of one section of the church. Outside the church, also, anti-slavery zeal was on the wane. In 1803 South Carolina had reopened her ports to the foreign slave trade,<sup>37</sup> while in 1806 the Philadelphia anti-slavery convention, already referred to, began to meet triennially instead of annually.<sup>38</sup>

The spirit of compromise was further manifested in the General Conference of 1808. It eliminated from the Discipline every syllable on slaveholding among private members. The internal slave-trade was rele-

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36 "Journals of the Gen. Conf.," I. 22-23, 62-63.

Compare pages 22-23 with pages 62-63.

The subject of slavery aroused great interest in this Conference and was referred to a large and representative committee with the avowed purpose of satisfying both sections. "Journals," I. 60, 61.

37 DuBois, "Suppression of the African Slave Trade," 86.

38 Locke, "Anti-Slavery in America," 101, note 7.

gated to the annual conferences for control and a special, expurgated edition of the Discipline was ordered printed for the sensitive South Carolinians.<sup>39</sup>

Feeling ran high in that state on account of the anti-slavery position of the church. The strong anti-slavery "Address of the Conference of 1800," written by the bishops and widely circulated through the denomination gave great offence there. It was denounced as a disloyal and incendiary document. Bishop Asbury met with this dissatisfaction frequently, and commented on it in his "Journal." He said the address certainly alarmed and alarmed the South Carolinians.<sup>40</sup> He met a certain Solomon Reeves who objected to the views expressed in the address, and who used with Asbury the familiar arguments about slavery not being repugnant to the Gospel. The bishop observed cautiously that this man appeared to have no more grace than was necessary, and perhaps no more of Solomon than the name.<sup>41</sup> A member of the state legislature told Asbury that the document was much "reprobated" in the state, and that it had led to the passage of a stringent law forbidding ministers to teach colored people behind closed doors. The law permitted the authorities to break open the door and flog the offending blacks.<sup>42</sup> The two

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39 "Journals," I. 93.

According to Dr. Nutter of the New England Methodist Historical Society Library no copy of that expurgated Discipline has ever been found.

Dr. Tigert denounced this exception as the entering wedge which finally split the church. "Constitutional Hist.," 323.

During the year 1808 also, there culminated a series of minor changes in the General Rule on slavery which while doubtless mostly accidental were made much of later by the Methodist abolitionists. Matlack, "American Slavery and Methodism," 32-36.

40 Asbury, "Journal," III. 7 (Jan. 30, 1801).

41 "Ibid.," III. 9-10, (Feb. 13, 1801).

42 "Ibid.," II. 490 (Dec. 21, 1800); "Acts of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina," II. 351-53.

Methodist preachers stationed at Charleston had a very disagreeable experience growing out of the popular hostility to anti-slavery utterances. One received a few copies of the address and showed them to some friends. The fact got out, and the city authorities came to see him about it. He then burned the offending papers, but that was not sufficient to allay suspicion. On the following Sunday a mob gathered and he escaped serious harm only with the greatest difficulty. Balked of its prey this time, the mob came again when the other preacher was officiating. They dragged him to a neighboring pump and soaked him with water. One of his church members, a woman, ran and thrust her shawl into the pump spout, just as a man came along armed with a drawn sword and rescued the preacher.<sup>43</sup>

Bishop Asbury was much grieved at the increased difficulty of access to the negroes. The position of the church on slavery made the slaveholders fear the effects of its teachings on the blacks. Brooding over this matter, and seeing the increased numbers the church might enroll if it had freer access to the slaves, the bishop confided to his diary the query whether it would not have been better to work for the amelioration of the condition of the slave rather than for his emancipation. He doubted if society was ready for the latter. It certainly was ready for the former.<sup>44</sup> With misgivings like these finding lodgment in the mind of the staunch old anti-slavery bishop, we need not wonder so much at the general decline of radical anti-slavery feeling.

In 1808 also there came that change in Methodist polity by which the General Conference ceased to be a

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43 "Meth. Mag. and Quarterly Rev.," Jan. 1830, 21.

44 Asbury, "Journal," III. 298, (Feb. 1, 1809).



mass meeting of all the eligible preachers and became a representative body.<sup>45</sup> The first session under the new constitution (1812), while adding a rule closing the local eldership to slaveholders who could legally free their slaves and would not, made no substantial change in the antislavery regulations of the church.<sup>46</sup>

Four years later, the committee on slavery while deploring the tendency in the South to make emancipation legally impossible, and the easy acquiescence of the church membership in such unfriendly legislation, came to the pessimistic conclusion that the Conference could do nothing to help matters. Impressed by the anarchy consequent to leaving the control over slaveholding so largely with the annual conferences, the committee did however actually get enacted a provision that in the future no slaveholder should be admitted to church membership in states where emancipation was legal.<sup>47</sup> In 1820 the right of the annual conferences to make their own rules on buying and selling slaves was withdrawn altogether,<sup>48</sup> and in 1824 the slavery section was amended for the last time until 1860. To the two clauses still left in the old rules, there was added a new one making it the duty of the preachers to impress upon church members the necessity of teaching their slaves to read the Bible and of allowing them to attend public worship.<sup>49</sup> Appar-

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45 "Journals," I. 89. Tigert, "Constitutional Hist.," ch. XVIII. See also Appendix I. of the present work.

46 "Journals," I. 110.

47 "Ibid.," I. 167-70.

48 "Ibid.," I. 205.

49 "Ibid.," I. 294.

Two minor sections were also added now, regulating the church administration relative to slavery. (1) The colored preachers and officials were to have full privileges in all places where local custom would sanction it; and (2) annual conferences might employ colored preachers to travel, when necessary.

ently the church was now able to look without serious protest on the slavery—that “execrable sum of all villanies,”<sup>50</sup> in its midst. By 1828 so keen had opposition to any Conference action on slavery become that even a simple resolution providing a method of dealing with inhuman, slaveholding members was tabled.<sup>51</sup>

In 1832 there was no action on slavery. In 1836 the session of the General Conference fully reflected the new abolitionist controversy, with which we shall have occasion to deal in the next chapter. Perhaps we may trespass a little on the field of that chapter to record a last downward step in the anti-slavery feeling of official Methodism. At the General Conference of 1840 there was adopted, somewhat hurriedly indeed, a declaration that the simple holding of slaves should hereafter constitute no bar to the various official positions in the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>52</sup> Doubtless few saw the full bearing of this sweeping resolution; or realized that it might open the way even for a slaveholding bishop. But with this act on the records, it would seem that not only private members but ministers of all ranks might hold slaves, and the contrast with the early official testimony of this great church is most striking.

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50 Wesley, “Journal,” V. 445-46. (Feb. 12, 1772).

51 “Journals,” I. 337, 357.

52 “Journals,” II. 167-71.

## Chapter II

### AGITATIONS AND SECESSIONS

The tasks of the present chapter are easily defined. We must give our attention to the revival of the old anti-slavery sentiments in the church in the form of radical abolitionism; the collision of this new movement with the official church; and the resulting secession of thousands of the abolitionist members in the north and northeast.

By 1830 the old anti-slavery spirit seemed to have spent its force. The voice of the churches was no longer heard in protest, the old anti-slavery societies were languishing, there was hardly an abolitionist militant in the field, the Colonization Society absorbed most of the public interest in the subject, and it apparently was doing but little for the slave.<sup>1</sup> This condition was not destined to continue. Even then forces were at work that would aid in producing a revival among the friends of the oppressed. A world-wide movement was under way, that would make smooth the path of this revival. It was an age of isms. It was a hysterical age the world was entering. It was an age of humanitarian impulses, of a new social spirit. Prison reform, reform in the treatment of the insane and the poor and the defective showed a growing sense of social responsibility. Mesmerism, Fourierism, adventism, spiritism, Mormonism and other isms were

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1 Hart, "Slavery and Abolition," 165-66.

making, or were about to make, a strong emotional appeal. How natural to find abolitionism among these movements. The world was growing tired of slavery. Serfdom was disappearing in Central Europe, a wave of emancipation was passing over South America, and the agitation in England for the freedom of the West Indian negroes was at its height. Finally deepseated economic changes were working against slavery, as for example the sudden development of new economic opportunities due to the industrial revolution, which was calling for a kind of labor that slavery could not furnish. This change emphasized the differences between the North and the South and urged on the sectionalization of the country.

Whatever the causes the anti-slavery spirit did revive. Benjamin Lundy the first journalist of the new abolitionism touched the stern soul of William Lloyd Garrison who became the great apostle of the radicals. Garrison began publishing the "Liberator," January 1, 1831. Next year he was instrumental in organizing the New England Anti-slavery Society.<sup>2</sup> In December 1833, the American Anti-slavery Society was born in Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup> It issued a platform declaring slavery contrary to justice, to the ideals of our republican government, and the Christian religion. It said an organization ought to be formed appealing to the hearts and consciences of the people and aiming to reawaken sentiment against the intolerable evil.<sup>4</sup> The aims, progress and intensity of this movement are known to every school boy.

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2 Garrisons' "Garrison," I. 277-83.

3 "Ibid.," I. 380-419.

4 3 "Liberator," 198. "Constitution of the Am. Anti-Slavery Society," preamble, and p. 6.

Such a revival of opposition could not arise without finding quick response in a body with the anti-slavery traditions of the Methodist Episcopal Church. That great institution was soon quivering with the common excitement. Methodist anti-slavery societies sprang up, and powerful champions of the cause, both lay and clerical, came to the front. Among those so aroused few had a more interesting career, or fought more valiantly than did Orange Scott. Born of poor parents,<sup>5</sup> he got little formal education, having received but thirteen months schooling by the end of his twenty-first year. He interested himself in religious subjects and soon combined preaching for the Methodists, and working on a farm. In due time he became a regular traveling minister widely known as a successful and influential man.<sup>6</sup>

When the abolition agitation began he was drawn into it. He had known very little about slavery, scarcely realizing that it existed either in church or state. In the summer of 1833 he chanced to visit a brother preacher who had some knowledge of the new movement, and for the first time Scott heard of the "Liberator" and the Abolition Society. He at once purchased literature on the subject and began an investigation on his own account. For a year he said little, then declared his conversion to the cause of freedom, remained a recognized leader of Methodist abolitionism, until he withdrew to aid in forming the anti-slavery Wesleyan Methodist Church in 1842-43.<sup>7</sup>

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5 He was born in Vermont, Feb. 13, 1800.

6 "Autobiography of Orange Scott," chs. I.-III. (dictated a few days before his death), in Matlack's "Life of O. Scott." The two parts are paged consecutively.

7 "Autobiog. of O. Scott," chs. IV.-V.

Convinced of the righteousness of the new movement, Scott began to work for it energetically. At the regular meeting of the New England annual conference in 1834, he succeeded in getting tabled a resolution approving the old Colonization Society which on account of its respectable and safe conservatism was always an object of attack by the radicals. "Zion's Herald," the official organ of New England Methodism, was opened to discussions of slavery,<sup>8</sup> and Scott was chosen to champion the radical program. He was a persistent propagandist. He subscribed for a hundred copies of the "Liberator" and had them sent to the members of the New England conference with the result that most of the preachers were made over into aggressive abolitionists.<sup>9</sup> In 1835, this conference elected a large majority of its delegates to the coming General Conference, from the ranks of the radicals.<sup>10</sup>

Already the first Methodist anti-slavery society had been formed, at a meeting in New York City in 1834. LaRoy Sunderland, another active champion of the cause, presided. Bishop Hedding of the Methodist Church was chosen president of the new society but promptly declined the honor.<sup>11</sup> In June, 1835, the New England conference at its Lynn meeting formed

8 "Zion's Herald," (referred to hereafter as "Z. H."), Jan. 7, 1835. O. Scott's articles began in the same issue and for the next six months the subject was much discussed, Scott and Sunderland (see below) leading on one side and W. Fisk and Dr. Whedon on the other.

9 This was in 1834 or 1835 and before Garrison had won the opposition of the churches as he had to so great an extent by 1840. Garrisons' "Garrison," II. 289.

10 Scott, "Autobiography," 34-35; "Journal of the New England Conference," (Manuscript) June 10, 11, 1835. (Referred to as MS. "Journal New Eng. Conf.")

11 The New Eng. Meth. Anti-slavery Soc. invited Geo. Thompson, the English agitator, to address it. Matlack, "Anti-slav. Struggle and Triumph in the M. E. Church," 85.

an anti-slavery society,<sup>12</sup> and the New Hampshire conference followed suit.<sup>13</sup> At this time a prominent Methodist church in Boston opened its pulpit to abolitionist speakers—a move which called forth warm praise<sup>14</sup> from Garrison.

In December (1834) some members of the New England and New Hampshire conferences united in a strong “Appeal” to their fellow clergy on the subject of slavery. They emphasized those well known arguments of the party which it was thought would appeal to the Methodists. The writers dwelt especially on two aspects of the subject: Is slaveholding a sin against God in all circumstances, and must emancipation be immediate and absolute? They answered both questions in the affirmative,<sup>15</sup> and worked out most elaborately arguments from scripture, from the Discipline of the

12 “Z. H.,” June 10, 1835.

13 “Ibid.,” Aug. 12, 19, 1835.

14 Garrison’s letter of praise is in Haven’s “National Sermons,” p. VII. of the Introduction. Here is the extract: “In these days of slavish servility and malignant prejudices, we are presented, occasionally, with some beautiful specimens of Christian obedience and courage. One of these is seen in the opening of the North Bennett Street Methodist Meeting-House in Boston, to the advocates of the honor of God, the salvation of our country, and the freedom of enslaved millions in our midst.”

15 “An Appeal on the Subject of Slavery addressed to the Members of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church....”

In “Z. H.” this is called “Appeal to the Members of the New England and New Hampshire Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church.”

It appears in an undated Extra of the “Herald” issued in June, 1835, as well as in pamphlet form.

The question at issue they said was, “Is it a sin against God to hold property in the human species?” The Bible, they claimed, condemns slavery in the same way that it condemns many other things which Christians admit to be sins. A polygamist “might explain with precisely as much consistency—‘there is not one command in the Bible against polygamy’ as the Christian enslaver does—‘There is nothing in the Bible against Slavery.’” p. 7.

church, from the testimony of the Methodist fathers and from the utterances of contemporary English Methodists. They pointed out significantly that some of the regulations of the General Conference were opposed in spirit to the general rule of the Discipline, on slavery. These regulations, they asserted, seemed to imply that what was an evil in one state might not be an evil in another.<sup>16</sup> These thrusts indicate some obvious inconsistencies inherent in the attempt of the church to straddle the issue. The "Appeal" concludes with a suggestion that appropriate petitions be sent to the General Conference of 1836.<sup>17</sup> The "Appeal" called forth a "Counter Appeal" written by the able Dr. Whedon, a prominent Methodist preacher and teacher. He adopted the moderate views then popular among men of his class. Attacking the two chief propositions of the "Appeal," he advocated the practical view that slavery was not in every instance a sin, since it might do all concerned a great deal more harm to free the slaves at once, than to retain them in bondage. The very principle of the golden rule would prevent the freeing of a helpless old slave, and thus turning him out to starve. He met the assertion that no slaveholder could be a real Christian and therefore should be deprived of membership in the Christian church, by a simple reference to Bible precedents. The church at Colosse, under the apostolic eye permitted the relation

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16 The general rule of the Discipline referred to is: "The buying and selling of men, women, and children, with an intention to enslave them." "Discipline" of 1832, 78. Suppose, they said, instead of relating to slavery the exception (permitting slave-holding in states where slaves could not legally be emancipated) should apply to drunkenness and read as follows: "When any travelling preacher becomes a drunkard, by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our Church, unless he can show that the laws of the state in which he lives. . . ." etc.

17 "An Appeal on the Subject of Slavery," 24.



of master and slave. If all cases of slaveholding represented sin on the part of the owner, why should the early church have permitted it even for a moment? <sup>18</sup> The authors of the "Appeal" replied with a "Defence" of their position. <sup>19</sup>

The "Counter Appeal" is indicative of the opposition which the violent agitation of the radicals was arousing in the church. Such opposition was inevitable. Note the situation. Here in one corner of the church are groups of ministers and members issuing stirring pleas, organizing anti-slavery societies bearing the name of the church, preaching, lecturing, writing, and urging that the issue be carried to the larger arena of the General Conference. Nor is all this done in the spirit of brotherly love, charity and calm reason. On the other hand stands the great far-flung Methodist Church with its diversified interests, including at the same time these rampant radicals with their intolerance and immediatism, and the southern ministry and membership, willingly or unwillingly entangled with the slave system and all it implied. Obviously the abolitionist method of attack was not calculated to make the southern Methodist love his northern brother more loyally. The sectional cleavage was bound to become more marked if these agitations continued. The decade of agitation prior to the unfortunate schism of 1844, centered in the clash between the apostles of uncom-

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18 "Counter Appeal to the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the New England and New Hampshire conferences." "Z. H." Extra, April 8, 1835. Both "Appeal" and "Counter Appeal" may also be found in Elliott, "Great Secession," Documents 16 and 17.

19 This "Defence" is included with the "Appeal" in the pamphlet already referred to. It also appears with the "Appeal" in the "Zion's Herald" Extra mentioned, (June 1835).

promising emancipation, and those who felt that the extravagances of the agitators must be checked if harmony was to be maintained and ecclesiastical convulsions avoided. Thus the issue was joined and as is inevitable under such circumstances neither party was able to understand how the other could possibly be honest in what it did and thought.

Naturally the bishops came early into conflict with the disturbing elements. They tried to discourage discussion and soothe excited feelings. In 1835 two of the bishops united in a pastoral letter to the New Hampshire and New England conferences. They pointed out the pernicious results already achieved and the still more disastrous consequences that must follow both in church and state if the conflict went on. They recommended that members and friends of the church should refuse the use of their pulpits to those preachers who persisted in leaving their own charges in order to divide and agitate other societies.<sup>20</sup>

In May, 1836, the General Conference met, and in its proceedings abolitionists found ample ground for increased enmity toward official Methodism.<sup>21</sup> The two northeastern conferences most deeply tinctured with radicalism sent almost solid delegations representing these sentiments. While a very small fraction of the whole General Conference, it was an earnest and determined group that Orange Scott led, and it did not

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20 "Christian Advoc. and Journal," Sept. 25, 1835. The two bishops were Hedding and Emory. The letter is dated Lansingburg, N. Y., Sept. 10, 1835. ("The Christian Advocate and Journal" will be referred to as "C. A. and J.")

21 The Conference met in Cincinnati, Ohio, May 2, 1836. "Journals," I. 425. The delegates on the way to the Conference were warmly discussing the slavery question. "Z. H.," May 11, 1836.

need to be large to provoke excitement at Cincinnati especially in view of the feeling outside.<sup>22</sup>

The usual greeting from the representative<sup>23</sup> of British Methodism and the official address from that body touched significantly on the dangerous issue and brought it before an assembly supremely anxious to avoid it altogether.<sup>24</sup> The Conference refused to print the address in the church press. A report adopted on recommendation of a special committee pointed out to the English brethren the complex way in which slavery was entangled with the government under our federal system, and intimated that if they had understood better the difficulties of the American Methodists they would have addressed them in a tone of deeper sympathy<sup>25</sup>—a polite way of telling them to mind their own business.

A most heated discussion was precipitated by resolutions censuring two members of the Conference, both New England abolitionists, for addressing a meeting of the local Cincinnati anti-slavery society.<sup>26</sup> An

22 As was the case throughout this whole controversy, three different strands of opinion appeared at the Conference: radical abolitionists, radical pro-slavery men, and the moderates. The latter believed the church could occupy an intermediate position and avoid extremes. Stevens, "Life and Times of N. Bangs," 315, 316.

23 In this case the Rev. William Lord. He urged the abolition of slavery at the earliest possible moment that it could be done with safety.

24 The official address pointed to the success of emancipation in the English Colonies and counseled opposition to slavery on the ground of its repugnance to the law of Christ. "Journals," I. 427.

The Wesleyan address to the M. E. Church appears in "Minutes of Several Conversations between the Methodist Preachers in the Connexion established by the late Rev. John Wesley, A. M.," 1835, 203-206.

25 "Journals," I. 431-32, 434-35, 438. The reply to the Wesleyans may be found in "C. A. and J.," July 1, 1836.

26 Messrs. Storrs and Norris.

angry pro-slavery man <sup>27</sup> wanted the names of the culprits included in the resolutions in order that they might "be brought forth in all the length and breadth of their damning iniquity."<sup>28</sup> His attempt failed. Orange Scott moved that the Conference also express its disapproval of slavery at the same time that it condemned the acts of these brethren. Some one suggested that the words of the Discipline <sup>29</sup> be inserted instead and Scott agreed at once. This shrewd manoeuver put the majority in a serious dilemma. They must either appear to go against the Discipline or they must nullify the purpose of the original resolution altogether. Of course the amendment failed and the resolutions <sup>30</sup> of censure were passed by an overwhelming majority. On the other hand the anti-slavery cause was being thoroughly advertised, much feeling was engendered and the breach between the parties was widened. A new wave of bitter feeling appeared when, later in the

27 Rev. W. A. Smith of the Virginia annual conference.

28 "Debate on 'Modern Abolitionism' in the General Conf. of 1836," 6. This is a reprint in pamphlet form of the debates and proceedings of this Conference from J. G. Birney's notes reported to the "Philanthropist."

29 "We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery. . . ." "Discipline" of 1832, 191.

30 "Debate on 'Modern Abolitionism.'" 5-28. "Journals," I. 445, 447. Two of the resolutions are as follows: "Whereas great excitement has prevailed in this country on the subject of modern abolitionism, which is reported to have been increased in this city recently by the unjustifiable conduct of two members of the General Conference, in lecturing upon and in favor of that agitating topic; and whereas such a course on the part of any of its members is calculated to bring upon this body the suspicions and distrust of the community. . . ."

"Resolved, 1. That they disapprove in the most unqualified sense the conduct of two members of the General Conference, who are reported to have lectured in this city recently upon and in favor of modern abolitionism.

"Resolved, 2. That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slave-holding states of this Union."

session, Scott's pamphlet <sup>31</sup> on the resolutions of censure called out more resolutions, gave him a chance to debate the whole anti-slavery issue and allowed the majority to inflict another crushing defeat on the reformers — at least in so far as votes could defeat them. <sup>32</sup>

Everything seemed to go in favor of the moderates. The more extreme pro-slavery men were unable to get the Discipline modified as they wished. Unable to gain a wider statutory toleration for their peculiar institution, these southerners gave a striking sign of what might be in store for the church if it persisted in opposing them. W. A. Smith of Virginia headed a movement for a separation from the North and called a caucus of the dissatisfied ones. Peter Cartwright of Illinois, <sup>33</sup> the famous backwoods preacher, and a mild anti-slavery man, was invited to one of these meetings and reported that while some hotheads would go with Mr. Smith, most of those present would never consent to a division. <sup>34</sup> The matter soon dropped but it showed the increasing difficulty of pleasing all the factions within the church.

In the pastoral address which the Conference issued to the church this perplexing subject was discussed. In it the official body reiterated the hostility of the church to radical movements and most earnestly counseled the brethren "wholly to refrain from the

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31 "An Address to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1836," by Rev Orange Scott, a member of that body.

32 "Journals," I. 479, 486. For the debate see "Debate on 'Modern Abolitionism,'" 65-83. Some of the more pungent personal references appear on pages 73, 82-83.

33 "Journals," I. 426.

34 Peter Cartwright, "Autobiography," 361. "Z. H." Sept. 21 and Oct. 26, refers to this idea of Dr. Smith's. See also "Zion's Watchman," ("Z. W.") Sept. 7, Oct. 12, 19, and Nov. 2, 1836.

agitating subject'' of abolitionism.<sup>35</sup> Next day this much troubled Conference adjourned.<sup>36</sup>

The conflict was now transferred to the annual and local conferences. These had already begun to express their views rather freely and boldly. In 1835 the Ohio conference passed resolutions expressing its confidence in the existing anti-slavery position of the church and regretting the proceedings of the abolitionists with the feeling these produced at the South.<sup>37</sup> Resolutions to the same effect were passed from time to time by the Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Michigan and other conferences.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand the radicals who dominated the New England conferences were trying to get themselves on record against slavery and for abolitionism. It should not surprise us that the bishops undertook to silence these disturbers. Attempts to do this led, in the northeast, to the struggle on conference rights, a conflict between the bishops and the preachers as to what was and what was not legitimate business for the annual and local conferences. Differences had arisen even before the sessions of the General Conference of 1836, as for instance when the presiding bishop, Emory, in the New Hampshire conference of 1835 refused to put a motion to adopt a committee report on slavery, although he allowed the proposed action in committee of the whole.<sup>39</sup> A good ex-

35 "Journals," I. 487. The pastoral address is in "C. A. and J.," June 17, 1836.

36 "Journals," I. 499. Some excitement was produced also by the necessity of dealing with the anti-slavery petitions that came in. "Journals," I. 440, 475. "Debate on 'Modern Abolitionism,'" 86.

37 Elliott, "Great Secession," Document 20. "Z. H." Sept. 30, 1835.

38 Elliott, "Great Secession," 141, (Baltimore and N. Y. resolutions). Matlack, "Anti-slavery Struggle," 83, (Extracts from Philadelphia and Pittsburg resolutions). The N. Y. resolves also appear in "C. A. and J.," July 1, 1836.

39 Matlack, "Am. Slav. and Meth.," 40-41. This is perhaps "the first innovation upon Conference Rights."

ample of this problem in its extreme form is afforded by the proceedings of the New England conference in 1837. The preachers were determined that a strong expression of their anti-slavery views should be placed on record. Bishop Waugh was equally determined that it should not. Since he was a stranger to their conference they thought it would be a courteous thing to correspond, or confer, with him beforehand. He was told that numerous petitions had come to them asking for action against slavery; that they desired to present these and have them referred to a committee. They threatened that if this request were rejected the conference might refuse to do business at all. The bishop did refuse, arguing that conference action on slavery was unnecessary; that the church was anti-slavery; that the General Conference had condemned abolitionism; that it was not conference business; that their proposed action would unchristianize the South; and that the conference, not being a legislative body, could not receive petitions. He expressed regret at having to antagonize such a body of men, but felt that he must under the circumstances. Appealing to them not to persist he asked: "Will you, brethren, hazard the unity of the Methodist Episcopal Church...by agitating those fearfully exciting topics, and that too, in opposition to the solemn decision and deliberate conclusion of the General Conference?... Are you willing to contribute to the destruction of our beautiful and excellent form of civil<sup>40</sup> and political government,

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40 One of the commonest ideas running through this whole controversy, is that somehow those who are endangering the unity of the church by their agitations are also threatening the unity of the nation. Such thoughts are expressed, for instance, in the following: "Debates," (1844), 90-91, Remarks of Mr. Bowen. "Ibid.," 95, 237, Mr. Crowder. "C. A. and J.," Aug. 7, 1844, Letter of W. A. Booth, and proceedings of the Wesley Chapel Station, Washington, D. C. Cartwright, "Autobiography," 420. Smith, "Life of Bishop Andrew," 371. Mass. Anti-slav. Soc., Annual Report, (1845), 53.

after it has cost the labor, treasure and blood of our fathers to establish it?... I would that it [slavery] were obliterated from the earth; but in view of the terrible consequences that are likely to follow the agitation of those exciting topics at the present I cannot consent to be participant in any sense or degree, in those measures which are advocated by modern abolitionists." The preachers were unconvinced by this pleading and demanded equal rights with the Ohio, Baltimore, New York and other conferences in the expression of their opinions on slavery.<sup>41</sup> It grieved them to see that theirs was the only class of opinions denied free expression in the conferences.<sup>42</sup> No compromise was reached and when the conference met at Nantucket, the petitions were presented, but the president refused to put a motion referring them to a committee, or to allow an appeal from his decision.<sup>43</sup> The conflict was resumed at the next annual session with the same negative results. Scott made several attempts at this session to get resolutions through but failed (1838). Finally, he sat down evidently grieved and oppressed by the proceedings. The bishop then called on him to close the conference with singing and prayer. He declined, and Horton, another staunch abolitionist was called on. With a certain grim humor

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41 This episode with correspondence between the bishop and the abolitionists is reported in "Z. H.," June 28, 1837.

42 For instance, aside from the opposition to abolitionist tactics expressed in the resolutions of various northern conferences, that of Georgia was allowed to say (1837): "That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference, that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil." Copied from "Charleston Mercury" into "Z. H.," Jan. 10, 1838. This partiality the radicals naturally resented and it evidenced to them the pro-slavery leaning of the official church.

43 "Z. H.," July 5, 1837; MS. "Journal New England Conf.," June 14, 1837.



he gave out the following verse which reports say, was sung with remarkable fervor:

“Come my partners in distress,  
My comrades through this wilderness,  
Who still your bodies feel.  
Awhile forget your griefs and fears,  
And look beyond this vale of tears. . . .” etc. <sup>44</sup>

The same conflict showed itself on a smaller scale in the quarterly meeting conferences. The Meadville district of the Erie conference, (1838), Duxbury, Mass., (1838), and Cleveland, as well as others reported trouble. The experiences of Duxbury are typical. At this meeting one of the members offered a set of resolutions of the usual import but the final one of the set is of more than ordinary significance. It declared that “while God gives us the exercise of our reason and the use of our tongues, we will continue to plead for the slave and will not be silenced by civil or ecclesiastical bodies.” Here is a thinly veiled hint at rebellion against the church. Methodist opposition to slavery showed ominous signs of expanding into opposition to the government and constitution of the church.

The presiding elder refused to put the resolutions to vote because he believed them to be opposed to the advice of the General Conference and a reflection on the administration of the bishops. The members refused to do any other business until the vote was taken. The presiding elder then left the chair thus bringing the session to an abrupt close. One of the preachers

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44 Matlack, “Am. Slav. and Methodism,” 60-61.

took his place, called for the vote on the resolutions which were passed unanimously.<sup>45</sup>

The impossibility of getting their opinions expressed through what they thought to be natural channels led the Methodist abolitionists to go outside the official bodies and act through unofficial conventions. Several such were held during this quadrennium.<sup>46</sup> The first<sup>47</sup> in New England assembled at Lynn, Mass., October 25 and 26, 1837. It issued a declaration of sentiments and discussed thoroughly the question of conference rights on which it set forth its views in a special report.<sup>48</sup> Another convention met at Utica, N. Y., in the following May. Here it was decided to

45 "Z. H.," Oct. 31, 1838; MS. "Journal New Eng. Conf.," June 5, 10, 11, 12, 1839. See also the case of D. Dorchester at the same session. Mr. Sprague, the mover of the resolutions, remarked significantly during the discussion, that it was just such arbitrary measures that were alienating the membership from Episcopal Methodism, and disturbing the peace and harmony of the church. On the oppressors of the abolitionists, he believed, rested the responsibility for this alienation. At a quarterly meeting at Duxbury the following year a similar clash occurred. "Z. H.," Apr. 24, 1839. Occasionally there appeared in the Methodist Episcopal Church press extreme reactionary views, against the talk of church oppression and conference rights. For instance in the "C. A. and J.," Feb. 2, 1838, this thesis is maintained by a correspondent signing himself "Doulos:" "The will of the church in all things indifferent—things neither required nor prohibited by some Scriptural precept, example, or necessary inference—is the will of God: and designed, of course, to be the rule of our conduct." The controversy over conference rights may be followed further by means of a plentiful correspondence in "C. A. and J.," and "Z. H." In the former every issue from Dec. 1, 1837 to April 1, 1838, except those of Jan. 5 and Feb. 23 gives more or less space to the subject.

46 1836-1840.

47 The first convention of this sort appears to have met in Cazenovia, N. Y., August, 1837. It is referred to in "C. A. and J.," Mar. 2, 1838. (Editorial and Fisk's letter). The official proceedings appear in "Z. W.," Aug. 12, 1837.

48 See "Z. H.," Oct. 11, 18, Nov. 22, 29 and Dec. 6, 1837. The declaration of sentiments appeared Nov. 22, the report of the committee on slavery a week later and the report of the committee on conference rights appeared Dec. 6. See also "Z. W.," Nov. 11, 1837.

send a delegate and an address to the British Methodists. Although nothing came of it <sup>49</sup> this plan was hailed with joy by abolitionists in the church as they hoped thus to get a fair hearing in England and more sympathy in the grand work of emancipation. <sup>50</sup> A third convention at Lowell also encouraged them in their work. <sup>51</sup>

Another policy which the church felt obliged to adopt in self defence proved a source of great irritation to the agitators. Great care was taken in some conferences to exclude abolitionists from the traveling ministry. The experiences of Rev. L. C. Matlack <sup>52</sup> of the Philadelphia conference are illustrative. In 1837 his quarterly meeting conference gave him a unanimous recommendation to the Philadelphia annual conference for reception as a traveling preacher. Just before that conference met he helped in the organization of a small Wesleyan anti-slavery society of which he was made secretary. For this act the conference rejected him. Some of the preachers knew him and were friendly, but the bitter feeling against the abolitionists kept him out. When it was urged upon the conference that he was a

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49 Scott, the delegate, decided not to go fearing forestallment and embarrassment from the representatives of the regular American Methodist authorities. "Anti-Slav. Struggle," 126.

50 "Z. H.," May 9, 1838.

51 "Z. H.," Dec. 5, 12, 1838. These numbers contain the minutes of the convention (held Nov. 21 and 22) and its address to the church.

52 Mr. Matlack was born in 1816. He connected himself with the Sunday school at Union Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, where he was soon promoted to an official position. He was licensed to preach but being unable to enter the Philadelphia conference he went to New England. He seceded from the M. E. Church to join the Wesleyan Connection in 1843, but later in life returned to his old church allegiance, and wrote the history of the struggle therein for abolitionism. He also wrote a history of the Wesleyan Church and a biography of O. Scott.

young man of piety and talents, one member exclaimed in reply: "If he were as pious as St. Paul and as talented as an angel, he should never enter this conference as an abolitionist if I could prevent it." He was allowed to act as assistant at West Chester and spent the year there. In the following year his application was again refused although he was continued as an assistant. Circumstances now brought him into touch with Orange Scott. He attended the Utica and Lowell conventions and became associated with Scott in the pastorate of the Lowell church.<sup>53</sup>

Similar in its irritating effect was the persecution, as it seemed to its victims, of abolitionist preachers already in the traveling connection. Immediately after the General Conference of 1836 Scott was removed from the presiding eldership of the Providence district. After a year of successful work as pastor at Lowell, he spent the two following years on the anti-slavery lecture platform, then returned to Lowell

53 For a full account of these transactions see Matlack, L. C., "Narrative of Anti-slavery Experiences."

Just before the annual conference met, Matlack met his pastor on the street and the following dialogue took place: "So you attended at the formation of the Abolition Society the other night."

"Yes, Sir, I was present with others."

"And you was [sic] made Secretary, I understand."

"I was."

"Well, were not all those persons members of an Anti-slavery Society already?"

"I was not aware of the fact."

"Why, were they not members of the Methodist Episcopal Church?"

"They were without an exception."

"Is not the Methodist Church an Anti-slavery Society?"

"Perhaps it is. So it is a Temperance Society, but all admit the propriety of forming Total Abstinence Societies, and joining with them."

"Well, a set of Tomsonian quacks have as much right to get together and form a Society, and call it the Medical Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church," etc. "Narrative of Experiences," 3-4.

where Matlack was associated with him as we have seen.<sup>54</sup> LaRoy Sunderland was another to feel the heavy hand of authority. Soon after joining the ranks of abolition, he was made editor of "Zion's Watchman"<sup>55</sup> a radical organ. The conservatives in the New York conference stung by the sort of gospel he preached through his paper condemned it by resolution and during the discussion the most violent charges were brought against him. He was accused of publishing profanity, of slandering every minister in the church, of being unfit to edit a religious paper, and unworthy of the confidence of his brethren. Dr. Bangs prosecuted him on charges of slander and misrepresentation before the New England conference of 1836; but his many friends in that body won his exoneration. His foes returned to the attack at each annual session, until in 1840 he was convicted on one of many counts, that of having slandered Bishop Soule, by approving editorially a pointed piece of pungent poetry applied to him. Considering the position of the bishop it was decidedly daring and outspoken and showed how intolerant and exasperating the radicals could be. The poem was apropos of the bishop's declared refusal ever to advise anyone to free a slave. The last stanza is as follows:

"Receive this truth—deep, dark thy stain!  
Thy very soul is tinged with blood!  
Go, do thy first works o'er again;  
Go, cleanse thee in the Saviour's blood."

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54 Matlack, "Life of Scott," 109-111, 115-118, 121. "Am. Slav. and Meth.," 158.

55 See MS. "Statement" of Sunderland's p. 6 for some facts on the founding of the "Watchman." (This "Statement" belongs to the New England Methodist Hist. Soc. Libr., Boston.) Sunderland carried the whole of the first issue to the post office himself, in a pillow case.

The only penalty was that he publish the decision in his paper without note or comment.<sup>56</sup>

A little incident at the trial at which he was thus convicted brings out the extreme bitterness between the two parties. Bishops Soule himself was presiding (very unwisely under the circumstances, one would think) and his rulings on his own case brought sharp words from the defendant. These seemed to Soule to require a stern rebuke. He tried to administer it thus: "In all my experience," he said, "and in all my intercourse with my fellowmen, I have this to say, that LaRoy Sunderland is the first man that ever dared to speak to me in that manner." Sunderland almost screamed in reply, "I thank God, Sir, that you have lived long enough to find one man who will tell you to your face what many others say of you behind your back."<sup>56a</sup> The several trials under these charges were too much for Sunderland. He withdrew from the traveling ministry and from the church, and later in life repudiated orthodox christianity altogether.

Thus the struggle went on and in spite of rebuffs abolitionists continued for a time their policy of boring from within the church. Considerable activity was

<sup>56</sup> For other cases of alleged persecution see Matlack, "Am. Slav. and Meth.," ch. XIV.

<sup>56a</sup> These trials may be followed in "Z. W.," Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 1836, and on through year by year to 1840; also in MS. "Journal New Eng. Conf.," 1836, 1837, 1838, 1839, 1840. The account for 1840 is very full. The poem is in the issue of "Z. H.," Aug. 15, 1840, and the required statement of the findings of the conference against Sunderland is published in black faced type with a heavy border, Aug. 1, 1840. A general statement of the trials by Sunderland may be seen in his MS. "Statement," 7-17. The poem and introduction appear at pages 11, 17. The defiance of the bishop is on page 16. The dialogue is somewhat differently stated there from what I have stated it in the text. The text statement is from Matlack, "Anti-slav. Struggle and Tri.," 132 n. See also Matlack, "Am. Slav. and Meth.," 250-54.

being manifested in western New York, western Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan as well as other places outside New England.<sup>56b</sup> Many members also both lay and clerical, had become thoroughly disgusted with the pro-slavery, or merely nominal anti-slavery, position of the church, with what they regarded as the tyranny of the episcopal administration, and with the undemocratic polity that would tolerate it. In the light of the harrowing experiences of recent years what could be the mutual attitude of the two wings of the church at the approaching General Conference?<sup>57</sup> Orange Scott had again been elected a delegate and had spent some time trying to answer the abolitionist's part of this question. A very significant correspondence was going on between him and some friends about it. One writer fearing that Scott's name might be stricken from the list of members at the first meeting of the Conference, asked what the other New England delegates would do in that contingency. Another hoped that if any proscriptive action was taken it would be such as to drive all abolitionists in the church to sustain their leaders. If they could not stay in the old church and oppose slavery, they did not want to be absorbed into other denominations, but preferred to remain Methodists, in an independent denomination with some modifications in church government. In other words a new church was clearly hinted at. Scott himself had no idea that the Methodist church could hold together after the Conference. Writing to Cyrus Prindle Jan. 1, 1840, he said, "I have no expectation that the Church will all remain together after the next General Conference. There will either be a split between the North and the

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56b "American Slav. and Meth.," ch. XI.

57 Of 1840.

South, or such measures will be adopted as will render it *inconvenient* and *inconsistent* for the abolitionists to remain in the Church, should the doctrine be set up at Baltimore, [the meeting place of the General Conference] of which I have no doubt, that Bishops and Presiding Elders are the annual and quarterly conferences—i. e. that no business can be done except *as they please* and if in addition to this, oppressive measures should be adopted against the freedom of speech (*abolitionism*), I, for one, could not longer remain in the Church.” Rumors were rife of proscriptive measures to be taken by the General Conference, and the unequal contest within the church was making the once dreaded alternative of separation appear quite bearable.<sup>58</sup>

With the radicals in this mood and their foes considering anything but concession the Conference met.<sup>59</sup> Petitions for moderate episcopacy, lay representation, anti-slavery action and petitions condemning any anti-slavery action poured in. A committee was appointed to consider them. Scott presented a petition from New York City, which cost the Conference much time and temper. It was claimed that the petition had been padded, and an elaborate investigation by each party succeeded only in convincing each set of partisans that it was right. The episode showed how keen each side was to find something damaging to the other.<sup>60</sup> We

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58 Matlack, "Life of Scott," 161-164.

59 It met at Baltimore, May 1, 1840. The twenty-eight annual conferences were represented by 143 delegates. "Journals," II. (1840), 4, 7.

60 The episode may be followed in "Journals," II. (1840), 14, 82; Matlack, "Scott," 166-173; "Z. W.," June 27, 1840; "Z. H.," June 3, 1840; "C. A. and J.," May 15 and June 5, 1840.

The conservative investigators claimed to find that 813 of the 1154 alleged signers were women, that 100 names were entered twice; that many names were forgeries, that many of the signers were not Methodists, that it contained names of young children and that some



may note in passing that the Conference unlike its predecessor, was unable to get on the records any clear cut condemnation of abolitionism. There was one question before the Conference, insistent, transcendent, threatening, on the decision of which hung the future unity of the church, and that was the question of conference rights. Little doubt existed as to how it would be decided. It came up during the Conference in two ways, and first through a case of appeal. Rev. Daniel Dorchester, a presiding elder in the New England conference, had been condemned for exceeding his authority in suddenly ending a quarterly conference in the midst of business he had permitted to come before it, <sup>61</sup> thus abridging its privileges. The appeal was admitted and after a hearing it was resolved that the decision of the New England conference imposing censure on him should be reversed. <sup>62</sup> This resolution clearly foreshadowed the action Conference would take on the problem that had so irritated the abolitionists. The second time it came up through a direct request from the bishops for an authoritative ruling for their own future guidance. <sup>63</sup> Toward its close the Conference

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whose names appeared had absolutely refused to sign. The anti-slavery people took up the affair and proved to their own satisfaction at least, that except for some slight misunderstandings it was all right. Two petitions, one on slavery and one on temperance, it was said, had been mixed up. One of the fictitious names, a Miss Patten, who could not be found at 219 Allen Street, the address given, was found at 129 in the same street, etc. Some who were reported to have been imposed upon in signing said so only when asked if they had signed a petition for amalgamation, for a division of the church, or for a new Discipline, and of course they could truthfully say that they had signed no such petition, that if their names were on it it was only by imposition. (How human!!)

61 "Z. H.," Oct. 2, Nov. 13, 20, 1839; MS. "Journal New Eng. Conf.," June 13, 14, 1839.

62 "Journals," II. (1840), 46-48; "Z. H.," May 20, 1840; "C. A. and J.," May 22, 1840.

63 "Journals," II. (1840), 138.

The address of the bishops in which this request was made is in "Z. H.," May 20, 1840 and in "C. A. and J.," May 22, 1840.

decided that the president had the right to decline putting a question which in his judgment did not relate to the proper business of an annual conference, provided that, on request, he must insert in the journal his refusal and the reasons therefor, and, if the members differed from the president, they also might record their dissent. It was decided further that the president of an annual or quarterly conference might adjourn it when in his judgment, all its proper business had been transacted. And here again if its members took exception to his course, such exception might be entered in the journal.<sup>64</sup> Thus the whole contention of the abolitionists was denied. The presiding officer could fully control their activities in the local conferences. The thing that Scott most dreaded had happened.<sup>65</sup>

The abolitionist outlook was now decidedly cloudy. It was a period of great discouragement especially for those in the Methodist Church as they had just witnessed the sweeping victory of their opponents in the highest legislative body of the denomination. In the summer of 1840 Scott, by the authority of the Utica convention, called a new convention to meet in New York City the following October. The call gave the doings of the late Conference as sufficient reason for meeting. Numerically it was a great success—the largest convention ever held by the Methodist radicals,—but its results were disappointing. It organized an

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64 "Journals," II. (1840), 111-112, 120-121; "Z. H.," June 10, 1840; "C. A. and J.," June 12, 1840.

The proceedings are naturally given more fully in the church newspapers than in the "Journals."

65 It will be recalled that it was this Conference that passed the resolution noted at the end of chapter I. which marked the furthest step of official Methodism away from the high standards of the early days.

American Wesleyan Anti-Slavery Society which failed to survive its first anniversary; and its plan for a separate anti-slavery missionary society met with little public favor.<sup>67</sup> The radicals, both in and out of the Methodist Episcopal Church had fallen on evil days. It was a time of reaction, lethargy and disappointment among them. The Garrisonian party had split on the rocks of internal dissension. Personal disagreements, differences over the Bible, the status of women, non-resistance and politics had divided them fatally.<sup>68</sup> The annual income of the older society fell from \$47,000 to \$7,000, and the number of local societies and members declined greatly. The new society formed in 1840 had no such galaxy of speakers and writers as the older one; the western societies never united with it, and radical abolitionism appeared to be waning before the more practical political anti-slavery movement connected with the proposed annexation of Texas.<sup>69</sup> Many Methodists formerly active fell out of the fight. Scott's health failed and he dropped his work at Lowell, Mass., retiring to Newbury, Vt., where he occupied himself with manual labor and the writing of an occasional letter to the press. Meetings were held in various parts of the country, and formal activity kept up, but the loss of interest could not be concealed. For the Methodist abolitionists there was no more prospect of winning the church over to their views than there had been in 1836. "Zion's Watchman" was forsaken and interested itself in mesmerism.<sup>70</sup> "Zion's Herald"

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67 Matlack, "American Slavery and Methodism," 223-5. An official account of the proceedings appears in "Z. H.," Nov. 4 and 11, 1840, taken from "The Watchman." The Convention sat October 6, 7, 8, 1840.

68 Hart, "Slavery and Abolition," 197.

69 "Ibid.," 201.

70 See articles appearing Sept. 11, 1841 and succeeding issues, also material in the issues of Oct. 23, 30, 1841.

almost ceased to print anti-slavery articles. In the fall of 1842 Bishop Hedding could say that the radical excitement in the church was at an end. The editor of the "Herald" said that the abolitionists in turning the war from slavery to the episcopacy had contributed to the general depression. Doubtless the clearer appreciation of the alternatives before them led many to pause in their course. Scott summed up the situation candidly in 1842 when he remarked that there was no choice "but to submit pretty much to things as they are or secede." Secessions were no new experience for the Methodist Episcopal Church. They had occurred at intervals almost from its foundation. Since 1839 secessions of individuals and small groups of abolitionists had taken place in Ohio, New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania and elsewhere.<sup>71</sup> This was the net result of the clash between the radicals and the church officials and press during the preceding decade. When these fragments came together we had a new denomination, a purely anti-slavery secession — the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America.

While Scott was in retirement the Lowell churches managed to get into trouble with the bishop (1841). They had petitioned for a preacher, then stationed in Ithaca, and had been refused. They next adopted the revolutionary course of choosing a pastor for themselves regardless of the episcopacy, the only legal appointing power in the church. Scott, whom they called to their pulpit abetted them. A bitter fight en-

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<sup>71</sup> This account is made up from the following:

Matlack, "Am. Slav. and Meth.," 233; Matlack, "Scott," 185; "Z. H.," June 15, 1842, (Letter of Scott to the "Herald"); Luther Lee, "Autobiography," ch. XXV.; Matlack, "Wesleyan Methodist Connection," 301-306, (part of his "Am. Slav. and Methodism"). The quotation is taken from the letter to the "Herald."

sued during which the churches were declared outside the connection. Shortly a compromise was effected which appeared to satisfy all parties.<sup>72</sup> The significance of this incident, thinks Scott's biographer, lies in the part it played in reviving his radicalism, which for a time he had restrained. His fundamental dissatisfaction with the church and the steady stream of correspondence<sup>73</sup> urging him to blaze the way for his friends caused the movement toward secession to proceed more rapidly.

A meeting at Albany in November, was suggested to talk things over. In September Scott wrote to Prindle that after hesitating and hesitating he had at last decided to leave the church. He asked if Prindle was willing to join with Horton, Sunderland and himself in an anti-slavery, anti-intemperance, anti-everything-wrong church organization. He thought that within a year they could have over a score of ministers and one or two thousand members. As a general plan

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72 The Lowell affair can be followed in "Z. H.," Aug. 25, Sept. 15, 22 and Oct. 6, 1841; MS. "Journal New Eng. Conf.," July 2, 1842, July 3, 4, 5, 6, 1843. Strange to say Scott was never punished for his part in this local revolt. In a letter to three of the bishops and the editor of the New York official paper, while claiming to stand firm on fundamentals, he retreated somewhat on questions of method and detail. This may have had something to do with his escape. The nature of this letter can be seen from editor Bond's letter to Scott in reply, Matlack, "Scott," 194-95.

73 Matlack, "Scott," 196-201. Before the Conference of 1840 a preacher had written to him: "We must have a new church." Another in 1841 said, "The time has come. . . . We must have a new connection on Wesleyan principles." One who had already seceded wrote, "How long are you going to hold on? We have created an appetite among many lay members for liberty. . . . Now, Bro. Scott, does not duty require that you should look after the scattered sheep?" In the summer of 1842 his friends were telling him that abolitionists wondered what had become of him. "You have been," said one, "the leading spirit in the mighty war for principles that has been going on. . . and all eyes are turned to you. . . . Our enemies however think you have submitted and begged for favor."

of government he suggested that of the English Wesleyans with improvements.<sup>74</sup> At the Albany meeting<sup>75</sup> they decided definitely to withdraw. They discussed the principles of the new connection, and planned a new weekly paper, the first number of which should contain their reasons for leaving the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>76</sup> Briefly summarized their published reasons were as follows: (1) The Methodist Church makes itself responsible for slavery by having no rule forbidding slaveholding by private members, by declaring slaveholding to be in harmony with the golden rule, and by allowing annual conferences to say it is not a moral evil; (2) it is aristocratic in its government and no logic can make it appear democratic; and (3) it has adopted an uncharitable attitude toward the dissenting brethren.<sup>77</sup> Obviously the only real cause of the secession was dissatisfaction with the position of the church on slavery; the other grievances were incidental to this.

A preliminary convention was held at Andover, Mass., in February, 1843, which approved the formation of local Wesleyan Societies pending the establishment of a general organization, and called a great convention to meet at Utica, May 31, 1843.<sup>78</sup> A special

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74 Matlack, "Scott," 202.

75 Nov. 2, 3, 1842.

76 Matlack, "Scott," 202-204; Luther Lee, "Autobiog.," ch. XXVI. The new paper was "The True Wesleyan."

77 Scott, "Grounds of Secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church," 10-13. See also Matlack, "Wesleyan Meth. Connection," 308-17. Luther Lee, "Autobiog.," ch. XXVII.

Scott's pamphlet is an exhaustive study of the circumstances of the secession.

The MS "Journal New Eng. Conf.," 1843, 1844, records several withdrawals of individual preachers and of societies.

78 Matlack, "Wesleyan Methodist Conn.," 325-32.

invitation was sent to the Michigan seceders to attend at Utica, and local conventions everywhere were advised in anticipation of the May meeting. At the Utica gathering the Wesleyan Connection was formally organized. Excepting Maine, all the New England States were represented, together with New York, Pennsylvania and Michigan. The new Discipline, differing considerably, as one might expect, from that of the mother church, prohibited slaveholding, and the use of intoxicating liquors. It provided for lay representation in the conferences, allowed conferences to elect their own presidents, and formed a stationing committee of six, whose chief duty was to confirm as far as possible arrangements made between pastors and people. Geographically, the new church was divided into six conferences stretching from Maine to Michigan, and from the lakes to the slavery line. It started with a membership of about 6000.<sup>79</sup>

Meantime this movement had not been unnoticed by the officials, press and loyal membership of the old church. Its aims had been ridiculed, its leaders misjudged and misrepresented in the most violent manner. Neither side could claim a monopoly of bitter personality and the tendency to impute the lowest of motives to its opponents. Certain it is that the whole movement can be adequately accounted for from the viewpoint of either side without resorting to individual selfishness or love of place and power as explanations. Yet all the way through it was apparently an axiom with either

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<sup>79</sup> "Ibid.," 334-37. At their first General Conference, in the fall of 1844, the membership had more than doubled and four new conferences were added. "Ibid.," 338, 349; "Life of Scott," 220; "Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America," 22, 26, 27, 29, 31, 91, 94-96; Luther Lee, "Autobiog.," ch. XXVIII.

party that the other must be actuated by unworthy personal motives.<sup>80</sup>

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80 This is the saddest revelation that comes to the student of this division. Scott freely admitted that his methods and language and personalities had been too violent, and in his calmer moments he deplored his failing. See his letter in "Z. H.," June 15, 1842. Illustrations of the extravagances of his opponents are plentiful also. Here is a Southern minister's opinion of Sutherland and "The Watchman:" "Did you calculate to misrepresent the Methodist Discipline and say it supported abolitionism, when the General Conference, in their late resolutions, denounced it as a libel on truth? 'O, full of subtlety, thou child of the Devil!' all liars saith the sacred volume shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone." "Desiring no further acquaintance with you, and never expecting to see you but once in time or eternity, that is at judgment, I subscribe myself, the friend of the Bible and the opposer of Abolitionists." Parker Pillsbury, "The Church As It Is," 18, (edition of 1847).

The most sinister motives are suspected as seen in the following extract from an editorial in "Zion's Herald," Nov. 2, 1842, when it came to the editor's ears that secession was brewing: "What is the precise form of the proposed movement, we cannot say; but we can say, that *it is not to be an honest effort, by discussion or petition, to alter our economy, but a revolt, in which the leaders by their secret correspondence and preparations, are to carry with them all the spoils they can.* As improbable and iniquitous as such a project may seem to our readers, we now assure them that such it substantially is...."

The following editorial extract from "The Christian Advocate and Journal," Nov. 9, 1842, is still more to be deplored: "The agents of this great enterprise are, certain preachers who had grown so big that, as we had long ago foreseen, we poor Methodists, could find no place among us large enough for their accommodation. They have, at length, resolved to make a place for themselves, and we predict that they will, in the course of a year or two, be sweated down to naturalized men or be crushed to death by the fall of the building they are erecting.... They will now hazard all for revenge...."

See also "Christian Advocate and Journal," Nov. 30, 1842, for an editorial headed "The Denouement. Wonderful Explosion. Sunderland, Scott & Co. Again." This is a very sarcastic reference to their leaving the church, in the course of which occurs the following sentence: "But, the truth is, this ultra abolitionism is only the mask, the thin disguise, which has been made to hide an ulterior purpose for a long time past"—a statement as far from the truth as the continual abolitionist assumption that the course of the bishops in the northeastern annual conferences was inspired solely by a desire to retain power and authority.

There is ample evidence that party policy played a prominent role on both sides. It was intimated that the authorities wanted to drive the radicals out *for effect*, and that the radicals hoped for violent action against themselves as that would unite them and make



The Wesleyan secession had an immediate effect on the Methodist Church especially in the northeast. Abolitionists who wished to stand by the old ship were aroused from their inactivity. It was necessary to develop the anti-slavery spirit among loyal Methodists in order to stem the exodus from the church. Loyal Methodists began to employ the previously much denounced convention for their own purposes. Several were held in the winter and early spring of 1843. It seemed as if New England were moving *en masse*, and the utterances of these gatherings were the most radical ever heard. It was determined to convince Methodists that no one needed to leave the church in order to be a thorough abolitionist. Immediately after the withdrawal of Scott and his companions, the first convention was called by a group of Boston preachers, to meet in that city January 18 and 19, 1843. Its object was to preserve the unity and harmony of the church. Many, including the editor of "Zion's Herald" approved it upon this ground and upon this ground alone. The convention voted that slaveholding was sin, and that nothing short of speedy separation from slavery could satisfy abolitionists and save the church from serious division.<sup>81</sup>

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them look more like martyrs. See letter of Moses Hill, (Matlack, "Anti-Slavery Struggle and Triumph," 145), for intimation of a plan to drive the radicals out. See also letter of Horton, (Matlack, "Life of Scott," 191-92), for an intimation that the radicals realized the value to themselves of expulsion by the church.

<sup>81</sup> For the Boston Convention see "Z. H.," Dec. 28, 1842, (call for the Convention and a brief approving editorial); Jan. 4, 11, and 18, 1843. Jan. 25, 1843, there appeared the full official proceedings. Its "Address to the Slaveholders of the Church" appeared serially in the issues Feb. 1, 8 and 15, 1843.

There is some evidence that the Boston Convention was packed by men who had already decided to secede. To the extent that this was true it militates somewhat against the significance of its utterances. See editorials in "Z. H.," March 8 and May 31, 1843.

Other conventions took equally radical ground. At the New Market, (Lamprey River), N. H., meeting, held March 8 and 9, 1843, it was emphatically declared that in order to prevent the entire dissolution of the Methodist Church in New England, complete separation from the South and slavery was necessary; and they planned petitions to the next General Conference asking either the formal division of the North from the South along the line separating the slaveholding from the free states, or that the northeastern anti-slavery conferences be set off by themselves.<sup>82</sup>

These meetings produced great excitement in the church and the slaveholder was denounced with all the vigor of the early days. There is abundant testimony to the influence of these movements on the church.<sup>83</sup> It is significant that the strict episcopal ad-

<sup>82</sup> The official proceedings of the New Market Convention appear in "Z. H.," March 29, 1843.

There was also a lively convention at Hallowell, Me., Feb. 22 and 23, 1843. See "Z. H.," March 15, 1843, where the proceedings and "Address" are given. There is also a letter by M. Hill on this convention in "Z. H.," April 12, 1843.

For a convention held at Claremont, N. H., March 28, 1843, see "Z. H.," March 15 and April 19, 1843. The latter copies an account from the "Claremont National Eagle."

On the conventions see also "Autobiography of Luther Lee," ch. XXIX. From April 19 to July 5 inclusive every issue of "Z. H." gives space to the conventions or the secessions.

<sup>83</sup> That the troubles of the church would have become overwhelming without the secession of the Scottites is likely but the importance of the secessions as the events exerting a deciding influence on the schism of 1844 is freely recognized in contemporary and later writings. The secessions greatly stimulated the anti-slavery feeling among those who maintained their allegiance to the old church. The editor of "The Richmond Christian Advocate" (to be referred to as "R. C. A.") recognized the jeers and jibes of the Scottites as a cause of the calling of radical conventions in New England. Issue of Dec. 28, 1843.

A reviewer (Matlack says it was Dr. Whedon) writing in "The Quarterly Review" expressed himself in no uncertain terms: "We honor and love those men," he said. "Their secession, as we believe,

ministration in the sessions of the annual conferences was relaxed, no <sup>84</sup> form of anti-slavery expression being any longer objected to there; and that "Zion's Herald" again took up the cudgels as of old. At the same time other events were influencing moderate anti-slavery men to co-operate more freely with the abolitionists remaining within the church. Not the least of these was the Slaveholders' Convention which forced upon the attention of the country the more aggressive pro-slavery attitude of the South. The convention had sat Jan. 12-14, 1842, at Annapolis, Md., and had recommended to the state legislature a long list of amendments to the slave laws, one effect of which would have been to make more miserable the lot of the free negro. Many colored Methodists would have been affected, and when a bill embodying the convention's recommendations passed the lower house of the Maryland legislature, Dr. Bond of "The Christian Advocate and Journal" did valiant service in procuring its defeat in the Senate. This pro-slavery plan aroused his ire, and for a time it looked as if the columns of the great official paper

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saved our Church in 1844 from accepting a slaveholding bishop." "Methodist Quarterly Review," Oct. 1865, 612.

Matlack reports a conversation between himself and Bishop Thomson, in 1866, in which the bishop assented heartily to the view that by leaving as they did, the Wesleyans "constrained a development of anti-slavery activity within the 'old church,' which they could not have accomplished by remaining members of it." "Anti-Slavery Struggle," 144.

Dr. James Porter in his "Compendium" (p. 185), referring to the Plan of Separation and the situation at the Conference of 1844 said, "Our choice was between having a slaveholding bishop, the transfer of our churches to Wesleyanism, so-called, or a *general New England secession*...." He thus appreciated the influence which the radical secession had exerted on many who did not actually secede, but who, nevertheless insisted on a more definite anti-slavery policy on the part of the church.

<sup>84</sup> This was increasingly true even before secession had begun. See O. Scott's letter in "Z. H.," June 15, 1842.

might be pried open to anti-slavery discussions. In his righteous wrath Dr. Bond promised that since the slaveholders themselves had removed the ban from subjects hitherto thought surpassingly dangerous, he would "discuss them to the heart's content of the Slaveholders' convention."<sup>85</sup> Other editorials followed in which Dr. Bond adopted a modified anti-slavery tone. He objected to the new southern radicalism, which was as dangerous in his eyes as that of abolitionism, a radicalism which insisted not merely that slavery must be endured, but that it must be purposely propagated. This he could not countenance.<sup>86</sup>

The new position of the conservative editor of "The Christian Advocate and Journal" naturally alarmed the South. Press and conferences began protesting against it.<sup>87</sup> Dr. Wightman of "The Southern Christian Advocate"<sup>88</sup> reviewed the whole affair with special reference to the new attitude of the New York paper, and he concluded that Dr. Bond's change of view represented the feeling of that section of church opinion which would hold the balance of power in the coming General Conference, (1844); that it registered an ominous growth of the sentiment that slaveholding was sinful.<sup>89</sup>

The southern editor was only partly right. While it would be idle to deny that anti-slavery feeling was increasing in the North thanks partly to the Wesleyan secession, Dr. Bond had no intention of going over to

<sup>85</sup> 61 "Niles Register," 58, 322-23, 356-58; "C. A. and J.," March 9, 1842.

<sup>86</sup> "C. A. and J.," Aug. 30, 1843.

<sup>87</sup> See a typical set of resolutions in "Ibid."

<sup>88</sup> Referred to hereafter as "S. C. A."

<sup>89</sup> Matlack, "Anti-Slavery Struggle," 154.

Scottism. His 'outburst over the Slaveholders' Convention was but temporary, and he hastened to reassure the South of his safety and sanity. He admitted that his remarks had been rash and misleading. His policy was to remain the same as of old.<sup>90</sup>

This, then, was the situation: The northern secession had brought confusion and fear to that section of the church; pro-slavery radicalism, created in part perhaps, by the denunciations of the abolitionists, had aroused the moderates and pushed them in the direction of the radical position. The South feared for her disciplinary rights, and all far-seeing lovers of Methodism were trembling for the unity of the church. Truly the General Conference, now but a few months off, would face vast problems and disquieting possibilities.

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90 Commenting a little earlier on southern opposition to his supposed new policy, Editor Bond had said, ("C. A. and J.," April 20, 1842): "They infer... "The Christian Advocate and Journal" is to assume a new position in the Church, and is hereafter to open its columns for the discussion of...slavery and abolition. We assure them that we meant no such thing". "We do not intend to depart from the editorial course which, as we have said, we consider prescribed to us by the Church".

## Chapter III

### DIVISION BECOMES INEVITABLE

The outstanding facts in the situation just prior to the fateful Conference of 1844 were the increased radicalism of both the abolitionists and the southern partisans and the shifting of the moderates toward the position of the former.<sup>1</sup> There was every sort of speculation in the church as to what might happen at the Conference. Some saw the real meaning of the problem and feared the worst; others felt that, since the firebrands of New England had seceded, a quiet and harmonious session might be anticipated. Still a third class, while alive to the seriousness of the crisis, maintained an optimistic feeling and vigorously repelled the bare suggestion that schism was a possibility.<sup>2</sup> In general it may be said that the approaching meeting was awaited with anxiety not only by the church but to some extent by the whole country. The slavery issue was prominent enough in 1844, through the agitation of Texan annexation and otherwise to make any controversy involving it a matter of general interest.

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1 This situation corresponded rather closely with that confronting the nation in 1860, politically speaking, although by that time the abolitionists had ceased to be an effective force and their place was taken by the so-called anti-slavery men.

Strange to say the real fighters in the Conference of 1844 were neither pro-slavery men nor abolitionists, but moderate anti-slavery men.

2 In "Z. H.," May 1, 1844, the editor expressed his amusement at the thought that unity was at stake.

The "C. A. and J.," May 1, 1844, had no "foreboding." "We confidently look for a peaceable, harmonious, and eminently useful session".

The Conference met in the Green Street church, New York City, May 1. There were 180 delegates from the thirty-three annual conferences.<sup>3</sup> A gathering of nearly two hundred Methodist preachers made rather a striking appearance. Few young men were elected to the General Conferences. The body was composed in part of men in the prime of life, at the high water mark of intellect and eloquence and, perhaps in greater part, of hoary-headed, venerable appearing men who had given their best years to the cause.<sup>4</sup> Naturally the Conference included most of the leaders of mid-century Methodism. There was Dr. Stephen Olin of the New York conference who had lived both North and South, and who more fully perhaps than anyone else understood and sympathized with both sections. He saw vividly the difficulties that threatened his beloved church. At this time he was president of Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Connecticut. There was Nathan Bangs, a conservative Connecticut Yankee—editor, teacher, pastor, missionary enthusiast, and historian of the church; Peter Cartwright, the picturesque backwoods preacher from Illinois whose “Autobiography” is a frontier classic; and Charles Elliott, who had entered the ministry in his native Ireland and had come to America to play a prominent part as editor and preacher. He became the historian of the great schism. These men represented the moderate party in the Conference. From New England came the abolitionists James Porter and Phineas Crandall. From the South came Henry Bascom of Kentucky,

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3 “Journals,” II. (1844), 3-5. Volume II. contains the “Journals” of 1840 and 1844 and the “Debates” of 1844, each part being separately paged. See map for the names and boundaries of the annual conferences as geographical units.

4 The reporters for the “New York Tribune” were much impressed with this appearance of wisdom, kindness and venerability in the Conference. “Weekly Tribune,” May 4, 1844.

friend of Henry Clay, <sup>5</sup> peerless pulpit orator and confidant of southern statesmen; William Winans of Mississippi; the rugged Capers of South Carolina who "spoke in Italics and wore no cravat;" <sup>6</sup> and the brace of Pierces, father and son, of Georgia; George F., the younger, destined to be a bishop in the southern Methodist church, and both prominent champions of their section in 1844. Last to be mentioned, but by no means least, was William A. Smith of Virginia, the versatile stickler for the letter of the church constitution, exactly typical of the theories of his section, political and otherwise, one of the most powerful men in the Conference. <sup>7</sup>

No sooner was the simple work of organization completed than the burning issue of slavery arose. Petitions to deal with the slave question and the appointment of a committee on slavery <sup>8</sup> brought it up incidentally. It thrust itself right into the center of the stage, however, when the Harding appeal from a decision of the Baltimore conference was presented.

Mr. Harding was a traveling preacher who had been suspended by his conference for refusing to free

<sup>5</sup> Henkle, "Life of Bascom," 105-106.

<sup>6</sup> McTyeire, "Hist. of Methodism," 624; Smith, "Life of Bishop Andrew," 125.

<sup>7</sup> Thirteen of the members subsequently became bishops. Alexander, "Hist. of the M. E. Church, South," 15.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Capers objected to these discussions of the subject from General Conference to General Conference as though it were a proper matter for legislation. Mr. Collins of the Baltimore conference, (by geography and otherwise a moderate) on the other hand, thought it would make matters worse and increase the agitation if the subject were not taken up. It must be managed so as to create the least excitement possible.

A committee was appointed whose subsequent report showed petitions from nine annual conferences and others from the people, containing in all 10,000 signatures. "Journals," II. (1844), 13, 112; "Debates," 5, 6.



some slaves obtained by marriage. Now he appealed to the General Conference to reverse that decision and restore him to his old place. The case was taken up with Mr. Collins as counsel for the Baltimore conference while W. A. Smith appeared for the plaintiff. The General Conference acted as judge and jury. Several days or parts of days were occupied in reaching a decision.<sup>9</sup>

The debate rambled widely, involving the whole slavery issue and the policy of the church. It was urged in Mr. Harding's behalf that under Maryland law he did not own the slaves at all, that they belonged to his wife; that, under the same law, if he had owned them, he could not legally have emancipated them. Thus he claimed protection under that rule of Discipline which exempts from the emancipation clause those living in states where it would be illegal to emancipate. The resolution passed by the General Conference of 1840 was also referred to as favoring him since according to that action ownership of slaves was not a bar to any official grade in the church. In opposition, it was contended by the Baltimore conference that Maryland did practically permit manumission of slaves for they could go to Africa or to the free states and that there was no provision for returning them to servitude. It was pointed out also that the disciplinary rule applying to traveling preachers was more severe than that applying to local preachers or private members, and that nothing was said against freedmen being allowed to enjoy their freedom. A colleague of Mr. Collins supplemented his remarks with the statement that slaves were constantly being set free in the state.<sup>10</sup>

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9 "Journals," II. (1844), 23; "Debates," 18.

10 "Debates," 19, 22, 31, 32, 33, 41.

After extended debate in which several other members took part, the Conference voted overwhelmingly against reversing the decision of the Baltimore conference.<sup>11</sup>

The significant fact in the trial and decision of this appeal was that it revealed the inevitable clash between the two irreconcilable views on slavery represented in the Conference. It was this larger issue which they were actually debating, while the Harding affair was merely the temporary focus. Harding had become a slaveholder with his eyes wide open. He could probably have freed the slaves had he so desired. The point was that neither he nor his friends thought his acts morally wrong or ecclesiastically illegal. The decision showed unmistakably to the southerners what they had more than suspected already, that their opponents were in an overwhelming majority in the Conference and that they were disposed to use their power. The antagonistic parties stood clearly revealed to each other. One delegate expressed his opinion on the situation thus: "The great question of unity is settled, division is inevitable."<sup>12</sup> Others also saw and were grieved.<sup>13</sup>

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11 The vote stood 56 to 117, and the chair's subsequent decision that this virtually confirmed the action of the Baltimore conference was sustained by a vote of 111 to 53. "Journals," II. (1844), 33, 34.

12 G. F. Pierce, "Debates," 110. Myer's, "Disruption of Episcopal Methodism," 42. Myers asserts that the Harding case presented a question of similar import to the later Andrew case, which was already looming up before the Conference, and that it had been debated and decided with that case constantly in view. There is no doubt that the relation of Bishop Andrew to slavery, i. e., that he was a slaveholder, was generally known in the Conference from the first.

13 "R. C. A.," May 23, 1844. In his editorial correspondence from the seat of the Conference, Mr. Lee said: "The decision in this case [Harding's] is a virtual declaration of the opinion of the General Conference that slaveholding constitutes a disqualification for

This desperate situation could not but call out some attempt on the part of loyal Methodists to save the church. A committee of six was appointed to confer with the bishops and if possible, report some plan for permanent pacification. It was also determined to observe the next day as a day of fasting and prayer before God for his blessing on the efforts of the committee.<sup>14</sup> While these measures were pending some speeches were made which admirably expressed not only the dilemma in which the Conference found itself but also the spirit of the occasion. Dr. Olin, whose fitness for such a task we have already noticed, arose and under the mellowing influences of that sad hour spoke in a strain of tenderness that moved the whole body. We can not do better than to quote from his speech.<sup>15</sup> "He had feared for these two or three days that, though possibly they might escape the disasters that threatened them, it was not probable. He had seen the cloud gathering, so dark that it seemed to him there was no hope left for them unless God should give them hope. It might be from his relation to both extremities, that, inferior as might be his means of form-

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the ministerial office. It is regarded here as the knell of division and disunion." "There is no unkindness, no anger, in the body." He hoped that unity would still somehow be maintained.

Dr. Capers wrote mournfully in "The Southern Christian Advocate," May 24, that he knew not which way to turn. The secession of Scott, Sunderland and others had led the church to lean to the radicals in order to keep them loyal. "It is not worth while to split the hair which divides the present 'conservatives,' as they call themselves, from the abolitionists of a few years ago. Anything short of the most rabid and fanatical abolitionism is called conservative."

14 "Journals," II. (1844), 42-43. The preamble hit the nail on the head. "In view of the distracting agitation which has so long prevailed on the subject of slavery and abolition, and especially the difficulties under which we labor in the present General Conference, on account of the relative position of our brethren North and South on this perplexing question..." etc. Drs. Olin and Capers were the authors.

15 "Debates," 55.

ing conclusions on other topics, he had some advantages on this; and from an intimate acquaintance with the feelings of his brethren in the work, he saw little ground of encouragement to hope. It appears to me,"<sup>16</sup> he continued, "that we stand committed on this question by our principles and views of policy, and neither of us dare move a step from our position. Let us keep away from the controversy until brethren from opposite sides have come together. I confess I turn away from it with sorrow, and a deep feeling of apprehension that the difficulties that are upon us now threaten to be unmanageable. I feel it in my heart, and never felt on any subject as I do on this. . . . I do not see how northern men can yield their ground, or southern men give up theirs. I do indeed believe, that if our affairs remain in the present position, and this General Conference do not speak out clearly and distinctly on the subject, however unpalatable it may be, we cannot go home under this distracting question without a certainty of breaking up our conferences. I have been to eight or ten of the northern conferences, and spoken freely with men of every class, and firmly believe that, with the fewest exceptions, they are influenced by the most ardent and the strongest desire to maintain the Discipline of the Church. . . . The men who stand here as abolitionists are as ardently attached to Methodist episcopacy as you all. . . . Your northern brethren, who seem to you to be arrayed in a hostile attitude, have suffered a great deal before they have taken their position, and they come up here distressed beyond measure, and disposed, if they believed they could, without destruction and ruin to the church to make concession. . . . I look to this measure with desire

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<sup>16</sup> This change back and forth from direct to indirect discourse appears in the speech as reported in the "Debates."

rather than with hope. With regard to our southern brethren . . . if they concede what the northern brethren wish—if they concede that holding slaves is incompatible with holding their ministry—they may as well go to the Rocky Mountains as to their own sunny plains. The people would not bear it. They feel shut up to their principles on this point . . . . But if our difficulties are unmanageable, let our spirit be right. If we must part, let us meet and pour out our tears together; and let us not give up until we have tried . . . . I can not speak on this subject without deep emotion. If we push our principles so far as to break up the connection, this may be the last time we meet. I fear it! I fear it! I see no way of escape.”

Without a vigorous use of the imagination, we cannot picture to ourselves today the scene in the Green Street church when Dr. Olin sat down. It was typical of a great religious assembly. The deep emotion, the tears, the subdued chorus of amens suggest only an imperfect picture of the occasion. In a sense the spirit of this speech lived through the whole Conference, and showed victoriously in the famous, if illfated, Plan of Separation. Other speakers followed in much the same strain. The dominant note was dread and deprecation of division.<sup>17</sup>

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17 Dr. Smith said that the South certainly did not desire division. “What, sir, divide! Never!” Nor did he agree that civil war, as has been intimated, was likely to come upon them. He had no fear of civil disunion and war . . . .

“No sir . . . . We have higher and more appropriate reasons for wishing to preserve our long cherished union. The days for civil war in this country have gone by.” “Debates,” 57, 144.

Just a little later L. M. Lee, editor of the “R. C. A.,” preached for a friend at Norwalk, Conn., and had a chance to learn how people there felt. His letter to his paper showed that he had received considerable light. He realized how difficult the situation was for the northern Methodists. He wrote: “But this question [Bishop Andrew]

The committee on pacification worked for four days. At its instance separate caucuses of the northern and southern delegates were held to see what could be done. At last, all efforts at settlement proving futile, the committee reported its failure to the Conference.<sup>18</sup>

Terrible as was the situation exposed by such a report from such a committee, the Conference had yet to face its most trying ordeal. Rumors, current even before the opening of the sessions, had developed into a general understanding that slavery had invaded the episcopacy—that Bishop Andrew was a slaveholder.<sup>19</sup> May 20 a resolution was passed directing the committee on episcopacy to investigate the rumors and report the next day.<sup>20</sup> This was the first official notice taken of the disturbing stories.

The question of a slaveholding episcopacy was not a new one in the church. It had been discussed with

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involves more than the South may at first perceive. It is not so much an effort to injure or oppress Methodism at the South, as it is to preserve its life at the North. The truth is Northern Methodism stands on the crater of a heaving volcano.... Our Northern brethren are exposed to evils that justly entitle them to the commiseration and sympathy of the South. If they do not do some great thing to rid the Church of all connexion with slavery why then their people will do a great thing to rid themselves of all connexion with the Church. Secessions, divisions, strifes innumerable and uncontrollable as a summer storm stare them in the face.... But what a dilemma for good men to be in. If they move forward they destroy the unity of the Church; if they sit still they destroy themselves." "R. C. A.," May 30, 1844.

18 "Journals," II. (1844), 54.

19 There is a very brief outline of Andrew's career in Simpson, "Cyclopaedia of Methodism," fifth revised edition, 36-37. See also Smith, "Life of Andrew." James O. Andrew was born in Georgia in 1794, was licensed to preach in his nineteenth year, and joined the South Carolina conference in 1812. Until 1832 he was busy with his duties as pastor and presiding elder, and in that year was elected bishop.

20 "Journals," II. (1844), 58.

increasing interest as the differences on slavery deepened.<sup>21</sup> The North believed that it was contrary to usage to elect a slaveholder bishop, while the South held that it was not contrary to usage, but that it merely had never occurred.<sup>22</sup> Owing partly perhaps to his modesty, Bishop Andrew had never felt quite at home in his elevated position. This feeling combined with poor health and the worry of enforced absence from his motherless children had led him more than once to contemplate resigning.<sup>23</sup> In January, 1844, he had married a lady who owned a few family slaves, and the fact became known in the church. Having reached Baltimore on his way to the Conference, he had been surprised to find that his connection with slavery had caused great excitement, and that his affairs would probably be investigated.<sup>24</sup> Allowing his natural inclinations, irrespective of the slavery issue, to rule, Bishop Andrew had resolved to resign, thinking thus to allay excitement and prevent a dangerous and protracted Conference debate. Before putting his resolution into effect he had decided to lay the whole matter before the southern delegates, as his proposed course would directly affect them. He had arranged a meeting and had asked for their candid opinion.<sup>25</sup> This had occurred on May 10, ten days before any

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21 "C. A. and J.," Dec. 20, 1843, Oct. 9, 1844; "Z. H.," Oct. 25, 1843; Myers, "Disruption," 32-34; "R. C. A.," Oct. 26, 1843.

22 There is good reason to believe that Bishop Andrew got some votes in 1832 on account of his freedom from connection with slavery. On the other hand his moderation in the dominating controversy of that time between the High and Low church parties, also won him many votes. It was believed he would be a peace-maker. Smith, "Life of Andrew," 229-30.

23 Smith, "Andrew." 324-325.

24 "Ibid.," 340. The rumor had caused consternation in New York. It appears that Dr. Bond had discussed the matter with Bishop Soule there before the Conference met. "C. A. and J.," June 11, 1845.

25 Letter of Bishop Andrew in "S. C. A.," copied into "R. C. A.," Sept. 12, 1844.

official action had been taken by the Conference. The southerners had requested the bishop not to resign.<sup>26</sup> A committee from the caucus had informed Bishop Andrew of its action and had assured him that resignation would probably lead to a secession of the greater part of the southern churches. He had then promised that he would not resign.

When the delegates from the northern conferences met pursuant to the call of the committee on pacification, they also had taken up informally the bishop's case. A committee of five had been appointed to have a friendly interview with him to learn his views and feelings and ascertain if mutual steps might not be taken to avoid a general, public debate. Dr. Bangs had headed this committee and had attempted to make clear to the bishop the feeling of the North regarding a slave holding episcopacy. Bishop Andrew had refused to communicate with the committee except in writing and the committee in turn had declined to confer with him in writing on the ground that their errand was purely informal and fraternal. They had left his quarters deeply grieved and mortified.<sup>27</sup> Bishop Andrew's view of this meeting was slightly different. He felt that the northern delegates were conspiring to deal with him as the offender who had brought all these calamities upon them. He felt that they were his enemies and that it would be unsafe to confer with

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26 They set forth by resolution the facts, and requested him "by all his love for the unity of the Church, which his resignation will certainly jeopardize, not to allow himself for any consideration to resign." Smith, "Life of Andrew," 341-43; "R. C. A.," May 23, Sept. 12, 1844.

27 Elliott, "Great Secession," column 295. See "Western Christian Advocate," (referred to hereafter as "W. C. A.") Oct. 25, 1844, for comment on Bishop Andrew's having put himself under the control of "the mistaken portion of the Church."



them secretly and orally.<sup>28</sup> So far negotiations conducted by private, unofficial parties<sup>29</sup> have been considered, but official action was coming. The Conference committee on episcopacy had interested itself in the case almost immediately upon appointment. A sub-committee, headed by Mr. Crandall, a New England abolitionist, had had a talk with Bishop Andrew, May 8, and on the following day he had appeared before the full committee and made a complete statement.<sup>30</sup> It was learned that he had a mulatto girl, who had been bequeathed to him in trust,<sup>31</sup> and a negro boy left to him from the estate of his former wife.<sup>32</sup> His second wife had a few family slaves from the estate of her first husband and these Bishop Andrew had secured to her by a deed of trust.<sup>33</sup>

Thus when the mandate of the Conference came to the committee on episcopacy to investigate Bishop Andrew's affairs, it had already done so and was prepared to place the facts before the Conference. When they were duly presented Griffith and Davis offered a

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28 See the letter noted above in "R. C. A.," Sept. 12, 1844.

29 Sincere attempts appear to have been made by the northern delegates to get the difficulty removed by compromise or otherwise. One scheme was to buy the slaves of the Andrew family. It was promised that if consent to such a course were given the money would be ready within forty-eight hours. "C. A. and J.," June 11, 1845.

30 "R. C. A.," Sept. 12, 1844.

31 She had been left by an old lady of Augusta, Ga. The bishop was to care for the girl until she was nineteen, when he must send her to Liberia, if she would go, and if not he must make her as free as the local laws allowed. She had refused to leave the country so was living in her own house on his lot. She was of no pecuniary benefit to him and was at liberty to go to a free state whenever she pleased. "Journals," II. (1844), 63; Smith, "Andrew," 311-13.

32 This boy was given to Bishop Andrew's wife by her mother. It was illegal to emancipate him but he was free to go North as soon as he was able to care for himself. "Journals," II. (1844), 63-64.

33 "Ibid.;" Smith, "Andrew," 336-38.

preamble and resolutions, stating that a bishop embarrassed by connection with slavery could not serve acceptably in all parts of the church; that it was a very inopportune time to allow such an innovation; and proposing that Bishop Andrew be affectionately requested to resign.<sup>34</sup>

As we have seen the southern delegates had emphatically objected to his resignation; but now, in the interests of the North, that resignation if this resolution passed, was to be officially requested. Apparently resignation was the big issue. Why did not the Bishop voluntarily resign? Why was he willing to be the occasion of a protracted and disastrous debate? He has been most severely criticized for refusing to act upon his first impulses.<sup>35</sup> There was an evident disposition to think that holding the key to the situation he refused to say the word that would have meant peace and unity. Did he hold the key? There were really two questions in one here. In view of his position, was he to blame for connecting himself with slavery; and would his resignation during the sessions of the Conference have solved the great issue confronting the church? A very sympathetic critic, Gross Alexander, answers the first question in the affirmative,<sup>36</sup> and his

34 "Journals," II. (1844), 64.

35 See the indictment drawn up against him by Abel Stevens in "Z. H.," Oct. 9, 1844: "On that one man, we repeat it, rests the chief responsibility of our deplorable condition. A word from that man in the outset could have forestalled all dangerous excitement and saved the Church, but clothed in the highest power of the most responsible religious body on this continent, that man sat day after day, week after week amidst the anxious consultations, the tears and prayers of his brethren...and refused the only word that could have spoken peace to the palpitating heart of the church, and now it is broken and must bleed."

See further for the idea that resignation would have solved the problem, "C. A. and J.," May 29, July 31, Sept. 25, 1844.

36 "Hist. of the M. E. Church, South," 20.

biographer, <sup>37</sup> a strong southerner, is willing to say that if the bishop had reason to suppose that the results that did follow, would follow, his marriage should have been preceded by resignation. Mr. Alexander believes, further, that if Bishop Andrew did not know the situation in the church well enough to surmise that his connection with slavery would cause trouble, his ignorance was inexcusable. <sup>38</sup> We feel inclined to agree with these judgments. With the second question it was different. The opinions, quoted from northern sources, <sup>39</sup> to the effect that he could have allayed the excitement with a word, viewed the problem too exclusively from one side. We must keep in mind the situation on both sides. True, if he had resigned, his word would have calmed the North and insured peace there, but what about the South? It would have appeared to the South that the resignation had been forced by abolition agitation, and immediate division would most likely have followed. <sup>40</sup> This we may infer from a study of the resolution asking him not to resign, keeping in mind the intensity of feeling already engendered. One other thing should be noted also in any discussion of Bishop Andrew's responsibility: that from his own personal point of view resignation would have been the most welcome course. <sup>41</sup> How much it

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37 Smith, "Andrew," 338-39.

38 "Hist. of the M. E. Church, South," 20.

39 Above p. 70. n.

40 Neither is it certain that after his second marriage and before the General Conference, resignation would have avoided the crash.

41 In a letter to his daughter, (May 14), after recounting the events of the session that touched himself, he said: "I would most joyfully resign, if I did not dread the influence on the Southern Church." Smith, "Andrew," 355.

In a letter to his wife two days later, after referring to the protest of the South against his resigning, he said: "and for the sake

would have saved his feelings! He was able to endure those harrowing debates only by the conviction that his course was for the benefit of the South, and that he had its support—moral, religious and political. From this point of view he was a hero, suffering for a cause, and the South looked upon him as such. The problem for Bishop Andrew is not half appreciated so long as we think of it as a personal one. Obviously it was more than that. His course seemed marked out for him by disagreeable duty.<sup>42</sup>

Let us return to our narrative. The Griffith and Davis resolution and a substitute presented later, occupied the chief attention of the Conference for the greater part of eleven days,<sup>43</sup> and the officially reported speeches fill about a hundred very closely printed pages. Moved by the force of the criticism

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of that Church I have resolved to maintain my position and await the issue. . . ." "Ibid.," 356-57.

His statement to the southern delegates when he promised them that he would not resign voiced this same note of personal suffering to be endured for others. "R. C. A.," Sept. 12, 1844, copied from "S. C. A."

The feeling in the South is amply evidenced in those resolutions passed with so near an approach to unanimity by conferences and primary meetings after the General Conference. The Virginia conference said, for example: "Bishop Andrew, therefore. . . has taken a noble stand upon the platform of constitutional law, in defence of the Episcopal Office and the rights of the South, which entitles him to the cordial approbation and support of every friend of the Church." "Hist. Organiz. of the M. E. Church, South," 141. (Referred to hereafter as "Official History.")

<sup>42</sup> An incidental controversy growing out of this question of Bishop Andrew's resignation, and typical of so many similar by-products of the bitterness of this unfortunate conflict, raged around the alleged advice of Dr. Bond, verbally given to Andrew, that he resign. Dr. Bond said he never so advised him. Luther Lee and W. A. Smith each alleged that Dr. Bond did and that Dr. Bond himself had told them of it. The fact was that Dr. Bond advised him indirectly through friends and through the press, but not personally. A tempest in a tea-pot arose out of this incident. "R. C. A.," July 11, Aug. 15, Sept. 12, 1844; "C. A. and J.," July 31, 1844.

<sup>43</sup> May 22 to June 1.

levelled at certain features of the original resolution, Mr. Finley offered a milder substitute.<sup>44</sup> Instead of asking the bishop to resign, it requested him to desist from the exercise of his episcopal functions as long as his connection with slavery continued.<sup>45</sup>

It is out of the question within our space to attempt any detailed account of the prolix debates.<sup>46</sup> We shall content ourselves with a brief summary of the primary arguments, all of which recurred again and again. Naturally the real issue—the attitude of the two sections toward slavery—dropped into the background, and the legal, constitutional and practical aspects of the immediate problem—the position of Bishop Andrew—came to the front. Three phases of the legal and constitutional issues were prominent, namely, the relation of the bishops to the Conference, the interpretation of the Discipline, and the nature of the constitutional<sup>47</sup> effect of the rules about slavery. The southerners held that the bishop was beyond any such

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44 It ran as follows: "Whereas, the Discipline of our church forbids the doing of anything calculated to destroy our itinerant general superintendency, and whereas Bishop Andrew has become connected with slavery by marriage and otherwise, and this act having drawn after itself circumstances which in the estimation of the General Conference will greatly embarrass the exercise of his office as an itinerant general Superintendent, if not in some places entirely prevent it; therefore, Resolved, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains." "Journals," II. (1844), 65-66. (May 23).

45 Evidence crops out from time to time that vigorous efforts were continually making to reach a compromise. Sometimes it is shown by the rather common accident that a controversy was stirred up, the lie given and a newspaper war precipitated. About the time the Finley substitute was introduced, one such arose, which incidentally showed that the idea of buying the bishop's slaves was still alive. "R. C. A.," Oct. 3, Oct. 17, 1844; "C. A. and J.," Oct. 9, Oct. 30, Dec. 4, 1844, and June 11, 1845.

46 There is a useful summary of the debates in Buckley, "Hist. of Methodism in the U. S." (Am. Church Hist., Vol. V.), 416-38.

47 Church constitution.

interference as the Conference contemplated, that the episcopacy was a body co-ordinate with the Conference, and they subscribed to the theory "Once a bishop, always a bishop." Their opponents held that the bishop was a mere officer of the Conference and was therefore amenable to it in every respect. The South adopted the strict constructionist view of the Discipline, declaring that the bishop had violated no rule, that his connection with slavery was perfectly legitimate under the resolution of 1840 which practically legalized slaveholding in all grades of the ministry. The North replied that the silence of the Discipline was no argument against dealing with him and that the general phrase "improper conduct" appearing in the Discipline gave a basis for the proposed action. It was pointed out that if he had married a colored woman he would have been as unacceptable to the South as he was now to the North, and just as incapable of performing the duties of a bishop, yet he would not have violated the letter of the Discipline. Some of the southern brethren, especially W. A. Smith, were inclined to see in the constitution of the church a document instituting a government similar to the national government, a compact among the annual conferences, a government of enumerated powers, a compromise between the sections on slavery adopted after a protracted struggle. This view the North denied absolutely, claiming that the so-called constitutional contract consisted of mere rules, changeable in a few minutes by vote of Conference.

Finally, there was the more practical argument that it was not a matter of law at all but of expediency. Here the Conference struck close to the fundamental deadlock underlying the whole quarrel. We have seen it before. The North said that if the bishop retained office, the church in that section would be broken, per-

haps destroyed. Bishop Andrew could never preside there. To this the South replied with equal truth that to depose him and admit that slaveholding disqualified a man for an episcopal or any ministerial position in the connection would work untold disaster in that section. If one alternative would ruin the North, the other would wreck the South. In brief, the southern delegates felt that the strict letter of the law was on their side and that the northern majority was acting in an extra-legal and high-handed manner. There is a striking parallelism, as regards the fundamental issue, between the situation in the church in 1844, and that in the nation half a generation later. In the church the northern Methodists were opposing the extension of slavery to an office hitherto free from it and with the strict law perhaps against them, and just before the Civil War we had the Republicans opposing the extension of slavery to territory hitherto free, with the law again perhaps actually on the side of the South.

As the two weeks' debate dragged on, it still further illustrated the dilemma the church was in. Before unity was absolutely given up a final, brave struggle was made to reach a compromise. On the morning of May 30 Bishop Hedding suggested that no afternoon session be held, in order to give the bishops time to consult together and if possible, adjust matters.<sup>48</sup> The great debate was suspended until the next day when Bishop Waugh presented the results of the episcopal conference.<sup>49</sup> Their proposal was to postpone the whole question until 1848. They felt the danger of any present action. A decision either way would disturb the peace and harmony of the church

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48 "Journals," II. (1844), 74.

49 A consultation of all the bishops except Bishop Andrew.

somewhere. Bishop Andrew's embarrassment might be removed before the next Conference. They concluded their report with the hope that the novelty of their suggestion might be excused by the seriousness of the crisis.<sup>50</sup> This proposal later provoked a violent attack from a northern partisan who also pounced upon Bishop Soule, the alleged author of the idea.<sup>51</sup> The suggestion was referred to a committee for further consideration.<sup>52</sup> Soon after the plan was given to the Conference Bishop Hedding had an interview with the New England delegates which exerted a decisive influence on subsequent events.

There could be no doubt of the seriousness of the situation in New England. Abundant evidence on that score has been presented. Where then were the abolitionist delegates, and what were they doing? We have heard practically nothing of them so far. Were they too discouraged to take part, too few to count, or too indifferent to the future of the church to care? Not at all. They were very much interested and were numerous and influential enough to play an important role. But they were not needed in the open fight. Their work was being done in the present Conference by their erstwhile enemies, the old conservatives. The situation that had developed, in part through the Scot-tite secession, had driven the conservatives and the abolitionists into practical harmony. An incident is

50 "Journals," II. (1844), 75-76.

51 Elliott, "Great Secession," 308. This partisan was Elliott himself who said in part: "But Bishop Soule's new-fangled course, without Discipline, without precedent, but contrary to all usage, rule, justice, right and prudence, to send a circular to the societies and conferences with the facts, and thus *appeal to the multitude*, and, therefore, produce general agitation, exceeds anything the world ever yet saw in the annals of ecclesiastical matter...." and so on in the same vein.

52 "Debates," 185-186.



related which, while none too well authenticated, perhaps, fits admirably into the situation. During the Conference a southern member asked an abolitionist why he and his brethren had so little to say. "Oh!" he replied, "*we* have nothing to do now. The Baltimore Conference is doing *our* work for us. And they will get all the odium; and we all the benefit." <sup>53</sup>

In order to understand the interview between Bishop Hedding and the New Englanders we must go back a little. One who took part in these proceedings recalls some of the secret history of the time. On reaching New York the day before the Conference opened, this man, James Porter, an abolitionist delegate from the northeast, had been invited to a private interview with a prominent representative of the conservative party, <sup>54</sup> and asked what New England wanted. In reply he had demanded, in order that the Methodists in that quarter might preserve their peace and unity, that Bishop Andrew free himself from slavery or resign, that the Baltimore conference be sustained in the Harding case, and that the resolution of the previous Conference, against allowing colored testimony in church cases involving whites, be rescinded. <sup>55</sup> He had added that they wanted action of a more pronounced anti-slavery character but could hardly expect it under existing circumstances. He had thought that if this program were carried out New England Methodism could maintain itself, although not without some losses. His conservative friend had assured him that

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53 "R. C. A.," June 26, 1845.

54 A member of the Baltimore annual conference, probably Mr. Collins.

55 He also demanded that abusive language against abolitionists should cease.

his demands were reasonable and would command the support of the Baltimore delegation. At a later meeting other conservatives had committed themselves to this tentative bargain. It had been at the same time agreed that because of the prejudice against the radicals, the conservatives should take the "laboring oar" and allow the former to play an inconspicuous part. This plan was for the most part carried out and incidentally explains the inactivity of the New Englanders.<sup>56</sup>

During the debates on the Harding and Andrew cases the abolitionists had been conspicuously silent. Everything had been going to their satisfaction. Orange Scott, looking down from the visitors' gallery, must have been stirred to the depths of his heart to see his cause championed by men who had been his bitterest enemies. All had gone well until about May 30, when the proposal had been made to postpone the whole Andrew question and omit the afternoon session to allow a consultation of the bishops. This had broken up the composure of the abolitionists. They had immediately convened and unanimously adopted a minute declaring it to be their solemn conviction that if the bishop were left in office, it would break up the New England churches, and that their only recourse would be to secede. This view had been concurred in by some prominent laymen present, and a committee had been appointed to make known their action to Bishop Hedding before he should meet his colleagues that after-

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<sup>56</sup> James Porter, "General Conference of 1844," in "The Methodist Quart. Rev.," April, 1871, 242.

It should be noted that this article was written twenty-seven years after the event. But as its explanation fits admirably into the situation and is apparently accepted by one side and uncontradicted by the other, we have regarded it as true.

noon. Too much time had been consumed at the meeting and they had failed to see him. Next morning, as we have seen, the episcopacy reported unanimously in favor of postponement. A belated consultation was had with Hedding, at which he was fully appraised of the action of the New England caucus.<sup>57</sup> He was convinced of the justice of their demand, expressed his regret at not having seen them before signing the episcopal report, and promised to go into Conference and withdraw his name from the report advising postponement. This he did at once. Under rather dramatic circumstances, with all the bishops on the platform, he arose and asked permission to withdraw his name.<sup>58</sup> He was allowed to do so. The other bishops let their names stay attached to the document as a testimony to their efforts for peace, even if those efforts failed. The bishops being no longer unanimous, Dr. Bangs moved that the communication be laid on the table. The ayes and noes were called for and the motion was carried by a vote of 95 to 84.<sup>59</sup> Two unsuccessful attempts were made later to get postponement and these caused the abolitionists momentary anxiety.<sup>60</sup>

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57 Matlack, "Amer. Slav. & Meth.," appendix 3; Clark, "Life of Hedding," 592; "Meth. Quart. Rev.," April, 1871, 246-47.

58 "Journals," II. (1844), 81; "Debates," 188. He explained that he had signed the report as a peace measure, and in the belief that it would be generally accepted. In this he found he was disappointed, so desired to withdraw his name.

59 "Journals," II. (1844), 82-83. In the "Debates" of 1844, (188-89), the vote is erroneously given as 95 to 83.

60 First, an attempt was made to combine the bishops' plan with a mild resolution regretting Bishop Andrew's connection with slavery, and requesting him to rid himself of it as soon as possible. "Debates," 189. Secondly, a little later, resolutions were introduced stating it to be the sense of the Conference that its action against the bishop was not judicial but only advisory, and putting off final action until 1848. "Debates," 192; "Meth. Quart. Rev.," April, 1871, 247.

The episcopal suggestion of postponement embodied the last faint hope of unity, and the abolitionists in self-defence had effectively blocked it. Postponement was generally satisfactory to the southerners,<sup>61</sup> and many others. If adopted it probably would have satisfied them. Had the bishops remained unanimous, it undoubtedly would have been adopted,<sup>62</sup> and they would have remained unanimous but for New England. Secession and fear were rife in that section, its delegates reflected that fear, and a different direction was given to the course of events.<sup>63</sup>

This proved to be the turning point of the Conference. The Finley substitute now passed rapidly to a vote. Amid the profoundest silence the roll was called. The result showed 111 yeas to 60 nays. The resolution, asking Bishop Andrew to desist from his episcopal labors while connected with slavery, had passed by an enormous majority. Analysis shows that 110 of the affirmative votes came from the non-slaveholding conferences, and only one from the others;<sup>64</sup> while 52 of the negative votes came from the latter and 17 from the

61 "Debates," 189. Dr. Winans remarked that, "the southern delegates were of one mind to entertain the proposals of the superintendents."

62 A change of six votes would have resulted in its adoption.

63 So says Matlack, "Am Slav. and Meth.," appendix, 4. In the main it is true. Looking at this episode in the life of this fateful Conference as the actual occasion of the defeat of postponement, it is interesting and important, even crucial, but we must be careful not to overestimate events which, while actually crucial, would in their absence have left the ultimate outcome unchanged. The schism was inevitable before May 30; as a matter of history the New Englanders blocked the last plan that offered hope of peace. That is all they did.

64 The other conferences (slaveholding) were Ky., Holston, Tenn., Mo., Memphis, Ark., Tex., Miss., Ala., Ga., N. C., S. C., and Va. The lone vote for the resolution from the slaveholding conferences was that of John Clark of Texas, and he was a northern transfer. He was born in New York State. Hall, "Life of Clark," 19, 224-30; "Journals," II. (1844), 83-84.

former. No sooner was the Finley substitute passed than the minority gave notice that they would enter a solemn protest. It was read June 6, and while containing little not found in the "Debates," forms a convenient summary of the southern case.<sup>65</sup> Four days later the North read a reply to the protest which ably summed up the case from that point of view.<sup>66</sup>

The Conference and the church now stood squarely at the parting of the ways. Everything had been done that could be done to preserve unity. Confronted no longer by the haunting shadow of division but by division itself, unable longer to avoid dealing directly with it, what would the representatives of American Methodism do?

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65 "Journals," II. (1844), appendix Doc. H, 186-98.

66 "Ibid.," 113 and appendix Doc. K, 199-210. Mr. Crowder, a southerner, remarked that he would not be surprised if it lead to war. Great excitement was reported at the South.

## Chapter IV

### THE PLAN OF SEPARATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH

By a chain of circumstances over which neither party had much control the northern section of the church found itself master of the situation in the General Conference and the southern section found itself defeated and helpless. Obviously, continued union was out of the question. Would the victors attempt to saddle the whole burden of the common woes on the vanquished? Would they say coldly: we could not agree; in the contest the North won; you must either accept your defeat in silence, or go out as seceders leaving us the name and prestige and the property we have all worked unitedly to build up? It is to the credit of the Methodists of that day that the best ideals of their christianity prevailed in such a crisis. In a sense the spirit of Stephen Olin's speech still lived. They recognized, in effect, that neither side was entirely to blame. There was no desire to follow any but a mild and equitable policy. Indeed, so far did this spirit prevail in the final proceedings, that it may well appear that too much was conceded to the southern desire for ecclesiastical independence. Perhaps they erred nobly on the side of too great self-sacrifice.

Dr. Capers brought the issue into tangible form June 3<sup>1</sup> by the introduction of a set of resolutions looking toward partial separation. He would provide

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1 "Journals," II. (1844), 86, 87.

for two General Conferences instead of one, with the line dividing the free from the slave states as their geographical boundary. The two conferences were to be equal and co-ordinate; foreign mission interests, and the Book Concerns,—the great denominational publishing houses,—were still to be carried on in common. The resolutions were referred to a Committee of Nine.<sup>2</sup> The northerners on the committee deemed it impossible to get sufficient votes in the annual conferences to authorize such a change.<sup>3</sup> A more serious objection, if possible, was their feeling that, constituted as the committee and the Conference were, with a big northern majority in each, it would be inappropriate for them to originate any divisive measure before it was definitely demanded by the South. Dr. Capers<sup>4</sup> says that Mr. Hamlin proposed the form of their report, and the convening of the southern delegations to memorialize the General Conference in favor of division. When such a petition should be received and referred to a committee, a plan of separation should follow. The first Committee of Nine unanimously accepted these suggestions and reported verbally June 5, to the General Conference that it had found no plan which would be generally acceptable.<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not Dr. Capers is correct in his recollections, the course he says was proposed was actually

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2 "Ibid.," 90. The committee members were, Capers, Winans, Crowder, Porter, Filmore, Akers, Hamlin, Davis and Sandford.

3 The North also objected to partial separation. If it must come at all it must be complete.

4 Chairman of the Committee of Nine.

5 "Journals," II. (1844), 103.

For some light on the inner history of this first Committee of Nine see: Capers' letters in "S. C. A.," June 21, 1844, and Mar. 28, 1845; letter of Dr. Payne to "Sw. C. A.," Oct. 25, 1844, copied into "R. C. A.," Nov. 14, 1844.

pursued. The southern delegates met and were told that if they really wanted division they must ask for it.<sup>6</sup> A caucus committee<sup>7</sup> was appointed to draw up the necessary declaration. The committee at first clung to the idea of a partial division, but were overruled by the caucus, and the famous declaration finally presented was substituted.<sup>8</sup> On the same day that the old Committee of Nine reported its failure, Dr. Longstreet presented this document to the Conference. It is simply a statement that the action of the Conference in the Bishop Andrew case rendered a continuation of its jurisdiction over the southern conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry there. It was signed by the delegates from the South and was almost immediately referred to a second Committee of Nine.<sup>9</sup> This committee was instructed by the General Conference if unable to compose the differences otherwise, to devise a constitutional plan for a friendly division of the church. A motion to exclude the word constitutional failed and the instruction was allowed to stand

6 It was a most doleful session. Fitzgerald, "Biog. of J. B. McFerrin," 157.

7 The committee was Payne, Smith and Longstreet. See Payne's letter referred to in note 5 above.

8 Payne's letter as above. "Journals," II. (1844), 109; "Great Secession," 314; Hurst, "History of Methodism," (American Methodism), II. 941. The declaration is as follows: "The delegates of the Conferences in the slaveholding states take leave to *declare* to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that the continued agitation on the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church; the frequent action on that subject in the General Conference; and especially the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, which resulted on Saturday last, in the virtual suspension of him from his office as Superintendent, must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuation of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding states."

9 This committee was made up of: Payne, *Filmore*, *Akers*, *Bangs*, *Crowder*, *Sargent*, *Winans*, *Hamline*, *Porter*. The italicized names appeared also on the first Committee of Nine.



as introduced by Mr. McFerrin.<sup>10</sup> The committee completed its labors and presented its report June 7.<sup>11</sup> This was the famous Report of the Committee of Nine, or as it is more commonly called, The Plan of Separation.

While the plan was still in the committee stage, considerable excitement was aroused by the report that John C. Calhoun had been consulted and had confirmed the worst predictions of the southern Methodists as to the results, political and otherwise, of the Conference action on slavery.<sup>12</sup> There was some excitement also in New York, the seat of the Conference; a mob was talked of and some members feared an outburst of pro-slavery feeling that might force a reversal of the action in Bishop Andrew's case.<sup>13</sup> It was in the midst of these new anxieties that the Plan was produced, and the feeling of Mr. Porter, of the committee, may have been shared by others. He felt that they had looked too complacently on secession, but he knew at least one member of the committee (himself?) who voted for the Plan to prevent the reconsideration mentioned, and consequent secessions in New England.<sup>14</sup> The

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10 The history of these two Committees of Nine and the circumstances surrounding their appointment and instruction, are none too clear, and are the subject of controversy. On the whole the version in the text seems to fit best all the conditions. See "Nashville Christian Advocate," ("N. C. A."), Oct. 2, 1846 for one point in controversy. McFerrin's letter in that paper, and the Conference "Journal" ought to settle the question on the presence of the word constitutional in the instruction. See Tigert, "Const. History," 447-48n for the other controverted point; and Hibbard, "Life of Hamline," 138, 139. Mr. Hamline voices serious opposition to the instruction and there is some evidence that it was modified in Conference though the change did not get recorded in the official "Journal." See also his remarks, "Debates," 223, 226.

11 "Journals," II. (1844), 128.

12 In appendix III. we have considered the influence of Calhoun and other statesmen on the Methodist problem.

13 "Methodist Quarterly Review," April, 1871, 248.

14 "Ibid."

next day the Plan<sup>15</sup> was taken up by the Conference. Deeming separation a probability it expressed a desire "to meet the emergency with christian kindness and the strictest equity." The twelve sections of the Plan designated a method of establishing a boundary between the two Methodisms in case separation took place, allowed ministers to choose without blame the church to which they would adhere, recommended to the annual conferences a modification of the constitutional restriction to permit a division of the property in the Book Concerns, laid down rules for the division and transfer of property and for the joint use of existing copyrights.

A running debate developed. Dr. Charles Elliott who moved to adopt the Plan, expressed his strong approval. The church was too large, he said, and aside from the question of slavery, must divide sooner or later for convenience. This was not schism but division for greater mutual prosperity. In later days Dr. Elliott changed his mind about the expediency and constitutionality of the Plan, and this speech often came home to plague him. The debate showed wide differences of opinion as to the intent of the document, and what its effects, and the manner of its operation, would be. Some were sure it did not provide for division, some seemed to think it would prevent division, and still others, uncertain what it would do were sure the South could base no positive action on it until the scheme was sanctioned by the annual con-

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15 The plan in full is too extensive to quote in the text, but may be found in appendix II. It is of prime importance and should be studied carefully before the reader attempts to understand the remainder of this discussion. It has been reproduced many times. See "Journals," II. (1844), 135-37; Elliott, "Great Secession," Doc. 56; "Official History," 91-93; Redford, "Organization," 368-73; Buckley, "Methodists," (Church Hist. Series), app. III.

ferences. These differences were prophetic of the debate which arose on the same points throughout the length and breadth of the church.<sup>16</sup> The Plan came to a vote the day it was debated and was accepted by an overwhelming majority of the delegates.<sup>17</sup> Having thus given the South its *Magna Charta*—so-called—the General Conference adjourned *sine die*.<sup>18</sup>

Long before final adjournment, the problem that had monopolized the Conference was agitating the church. In the South, particularly, the people were going emphatically on record against the alleged tyranny of the northern majority. The news of the failure in the National Senate of the Texas Annexation treaty, and the whole background of the Texan controversy in the political life of the time of course added to the fervor of opposition to the Conference action in the Bishop Andrew case. Meetings, both lay and clerical were being held throughout the slaveholding section.

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16 Mr. Griffith said he would oppose it if he stood alone. He denied all right to divide the church. Peter Cartwright said he would rather die than kill the church, the proposal was a wicked one. Let the discontented ones go. The door was open. God had always provided a "trash trap" to take the scum away. He could trust Him now. (Later replying to a question he said he was not applying the term trash trap to the South). Mr. Filmore said the plan simply provided for a contingency. None would wish to withhold from the southern brethren a cent of the common funds. Dr. Bond, who was not a member of the body but had been granted the privilege of the floor, asked why this committee had not adhered to conference lines in fixing the boundaries. Allowing a shifting border would provoke war all along the line—a prophetic remark. Dr. Sandford opposed the measure since it invited separation. "Debates," 219-25.

17 The first resolution passed finally by a vote of 146 to 16, actual count, allowing for one change made at the General Conference in 1848. "Journals," III. (1848), 67. The second received 139 to 17; the third 146 to 10, actual count. The fifth received 151 to 13. The other votes are not reported. "Journals," II. (1844), 130-35; Tigert, "Const. Hist.," 450; Myers, "Disruption," 99.

18 June 11, 12 :15 A. M.

Between July 4, 1844 and March 1, 1845, "The Richmond Christian Advocate" printed at least sixty-seven sets of resolutions passed by such meetings. This action was often unanimous and the laity appeared to be as much enraged as the ministry. So wide-spread and spontaneous was this movement that it is difficult now to see how doubt could arise whether the southern delegates truly represented their people. Yet both at the North and at the South the opinion was frequently expressed that the pernicious activity of the other section was due to a conspiracy among a few designing leaders.<sup>19</sup> This suggests the similar view common at one time, of the origin of the Civil War. A little study of abolitionism as a popular movement, of the southern opposition to it; and of the situation immediately preceding the War will easily convince one that the conspiracy theory is not needed to account for the events in either case.

There is a marked similarity of tone in these southern resolutions. The authors eulogized Bishops Soule and Andrew, repudiated the idea that slavery is a moral evil, denounced abolition as a "foul spirit of the pit, whose mildew breath" would blast the church of God. They demanded a separation from the North in the interests of the southern church, approved the work of the Committee of Nine, thanked the southern delegates for their manly stand for southern rights, and, since "The Christian Advocate and Journal" was edited by an abolitionist, they pledged themselves to diminish its circulation in the South by all honorable

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<sup>19</sup> This theory is suggested in Cartwright, "Autobiography," 416, 436; remarks of W. A. Smith, "Debates," 16; "R. C. A.," May 30, 1844; "C. A. and J.," Mar. 12, 1845, April 8, 1846, Jan. 13, 1847.

means.<sup>20</sup> Sets of resolutions varied from one another in details, but as a rule through six, eight or a dozen articles, ranging from fulsome praise of friends to vitriolic denunciation of foes, the feelings of the South were expressed. The unnecessary violence of language had its natural effect on the North<sup>21</sup> and was regretted by the more sober spirits in the South.<sup>22</sup> The correspondence from different parts of the country that formed so common a feature of the old newspapers religious and secular, is of some value as evidence of local feeling. It fully corroborates the opinion formed by a study of these resolves.<sup>23</sup>

So great was the importance attached to the action of the General Conference that the general citizenship of the South as well as the churchmen took an interest in it. During the summer there was widespread agitation for a southern convention to consider the status of their "peculiar institution" and to urge the annexation of Texas. Such a meeting in Alabama<sup>24</sup> took cognizance of the doings of the Conference. It deplored the transfer of the current agitation into the

20 See resolutions passed at a meeting of several Methodist congregations in Princess Anne Circuit, Virginia, June 22, 1844. "R. C. A." July 18, 1844. For other sets see especially "R. C. A.," July 4, 25, August 1, 22 and Sept. 5, 1844.

21 For illustration of its early reception at the North see "C. A. and J.," June 26, 1844, where the editor advised them to consider more gravely and in the fear of God whether there be necessity for separation. July 10, he dwelt on the revengeful, implacable hateful tone, in the southern resolutions. He hoped the South would cool down before the Louisville convention met to consider the question of a new church.

22 Regret for this extravagant and unchristian language was expressed in the resolutions of later southern conferences. See "Official History," 124-27 (Missouri conference); 132-34 (Memphis conference); 135-37 (Mississippi); 137-39 (Ark.)

23 See for example "R. C. A.," Sept. 12, 1844, letters of D. Culbreth and R. J. Carson.

24 In Russell Co., June 8, 1844.

church which ought to be sacred to charity, peace and goodwill. The members were indignant at the sight of a Georgia bishop tried as a culprit for marrying a slave-owning wife—an insinuation that he thus became unfit to teach the word of God. They urged the southern Methodists to secede if the bishop was deposed, and promised them the unalterable support of every sect and denomination in Dixie.<sup>25</sup> Later in the year the governor of South Carolina in his annual message to the legislature, referred to the alleged deposition of Bishop Andrew by the Methodist Episcopal Church, telling the law makers that the Methodists of the South were entitled to honor for the spirit with which in reply to this insult they had dissolved all connection with their brethren in the North.<sup>26</sup>

This surely was soil for the southern delegates to grow sentiment for an independent church. Before leaving New York these men convened (June 11, the very day Conference adjourned) to consider plans for the future. This action they defended against northern criticism on the ground that it was necessary to prevent ecclesiastical anarchy in the South. A definite direction must be given to the popular movement and a program of action worked out. What concerted action could be planned after these delegates, who best

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25 66 "Niles Register," 312-13. For other such meetings see "Ibid.," 256, 288.

At a Fourth of July meeting in the M. E. Church at Marlon C. H., S. C., strong political disunion sentiments were expressed. After toasting Bishop Soule as the kind of *soul* the South wanted, other toasts were proposed. "Texas; Its speedy annexation at all and every hazard." "Texas; Let us have her now, (she has freely offered herself) aye even at the hazard of disunion." "Disunion—Startle not at the sound! To this complexion it must be at last." "Ibid.," 345-6.

26 "Journal of Senate of S. Carolina," 1844, 18-19. See also appendix III. of the present work.

of anyone in their section knew the situation, had scattered to their homes? Then, too, according to the Plan, on them alone rested the responsibility of deciding on the necessity for disunion. Was it not the logical thing to meet and make plans? The criticism of the northern Methodists was that, having intimated in the Conference that the passage of the Plan would calm the slavery section and tend to make separation unnecessary, the southerners were now met in caucus to plan a complete separation from the old church.

At this meeting the southern delegates after due deliberation decided, in order to find out definitely what their constituents wanted, to propose a convention which should meet at Louisville, Ky., May 1, 1845. To this gathering the annual conferences should send delegates properly instructed on the question of an independent church. These instructions should as nearly as possible reflect the wishes of the members as well as of the ministers.<sup>27</sup>

The next step in the formation of an independent church was the action taken by the southern conferences on this question of the necessity of dividing the church. The Kentucky conference beginning in September was the first to meet. As its action was imitated by the succeeding conferences, it may be taken as typical. In the first place we find the inevitable assertion that the action taken in the Harding and Andrew cases was not warranted by the Discipline. The pious hope was expressed that separation might yet

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<sup>27</sup> For copious extracts from the minutes of this meeting, see "R. C. A.," June 27, 1844.

Myers thinks that the Civil War is sufficient proof that the southern delegates understood the wishes of their people. "Disruption," 92.

be arrested, the proposed convention was approved, and May 1 was set apart as a day of prayer and fasting for its guidance. Kentucky's delegates were instructed to insist that the new connection should not be considered as a secession from the old church, but as a co-ordinate branch of it; that no material change should be made in the Discipline; and that if respect and security could not be obtained for the rights of the South, they would consider the separation unavoidable. These were the chief items in the resolutions and they were passed almost unanimously.<sup>28</sup> With little deviation the other conferences followed the lead of Kentucky. Several added their sincere regret, as we have already noted, at the violent language used by some in the South and also at the radicalism of the North. They reiterated their brotherly love for the Methodists at the North. Many references were made to the unanimity of feeling in the annual conferences as to the need of division. This unanimity was naturally less noticeable in the border and western regions. Especially in the mountains of Virginia and North and South Carolina was the feeling of unity with, and love for, the old church strong. This region had and still has a set of economic, social and political interests separate in many ways from the lowlands to the east. Slavery was less profitable in the hills and a distinct cleavage in the states covering mountain and lowland territory was evident. It is noteworthy that this was the area where union sentiment revived most quickly during the later months of the Civil War.<sup>29</sup> The Holston conference occupied much of this region.

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28 For these resolutions see "Official History," 109-11. For the "Address" they issued to the membership see "Ibid.," 111-24.

29 Other references to this fact will appear as we discuss the boundary and property phases of the Methodist schism.



While strongly <sup>30</sup> leaning toward the South it felt called upon to make one more effort to prevent division. It asked its neighbor conferences to agree to a joint meeting of a small number of delegates (one from each annual conference, North and South) at Louisville, at the same time as the convention, to devise a compromise. It also requested that if this failed a plan providing a body representing each of the two General Conferences be tried, which should adjust differences in the interval of the quadrennial sessions—a kind of common executive committee. If both of these plans should fail the Holston delegates were to support the official Plan of Separation. <sup>31</sup> These well-meant suggestions met with no real response. They were significant however, for the reasons already mentioned.

The Virginia resolutions appear to have been drawn up with little dependence upon others. In them we find expressed an idea that received considerable attention in some quarters at the South, namely, that the Southern conferences should not dissolve connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but only with the General Conference. This sounds like the constitutional pedantry of W. A. Smith who was on the committee to draw up the resolutions. <sup>32</sup> It was a position highly distasteful to the North, and utterly unwarranted by the letter or spirit of the Plan. <sup>33</sup> The first Committee of Nine, as we have seen, clearly repudiated the idea.

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<sup>30</sup> Meeting Oct. 9, 1844. See map.

<sup>31</sup> For the Holston resolutions and recommendations in full see "Official History," 128-29.

<sup>32</sup> "Official History," 139-41.

<sup>33</sup> The Plan contemplated "a distinct ecclesiastical connection," "Debates," 218.

It should not be supposed that the South was absolutely a unit. There were discordant notes in the chorus of approval. Besides the border and mountain districts already mentioned the Baltimore conference showed serious division of sentiment. Elsewhere also there appeared sporadic cases of dissent, but compared with the vast body of favorable opinion, when every possible allowance has been made, they were relatively insignificant.<sup>34</sup>

This strong movement for the establishment of an independent church was not perceptibly checked by the various compromise plans proposed after the adjournment of the General Conference. Methodists would scarcely have been typical Americans of that day and generation had they not tried their hands at compromise. It was that same spirit of compromise which saved the nation until nationalism was strong enough to care for itself.<sup>35</sup> The annual conferences were not the only, or even the chief, sources of these plans. Ministers, laymen and local societies or churches in the West and on the borderland were anxious to prevent strife by preventing schism. A church at Washington, D. C., showing strong northern sympathies and wishing to avoid conflicts in which it and its neighbors would be the chief sufferers, proposed that a boundary line be established in the united church north of which the

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34 For the division of sentiment in the Baltimore conference see "R. C. A.," Dec. 26, 1844, Jan 2, Jan. 23, 1845; "C. A. and J.," Feb. 12, 19, March 5, 1845. For minority activity elsewhere in the South see "C. A. and J.," April 23, 1845, (Kentucky), Dec. 11, 1844, (Alabama and Louisiana); "Pittsburgh Christian Advocate," ("P. C. A."), July 9, 1845, (Va.); "Western Christian Advocate," ("W. C. A."), July 11, 1845, (Ark).

35 These ecclesiastical compromisers may be compared with the political compromisers of 1850 as well as with those who made up the Constitutional Union party in 1860.

bishops should be non-slaveholders, while south of it episcopal slaveholding might be permitted. Each side was to select its own bishops, but otherwise the superintendency would remain general as the rules and traditions of the church demanded.<sup>36</sup>

A correspondent of Bishop Andrew's had suggested the postponement of the coming convention at Louisville, to give the free-state conferences a chance to elect a delegate each to attend the convention, and to co-operate with similar delegates from the South in solving the common problems. The results of this meeting were to be submitted to an extra General Conference in 1846.<sup>37</sup> Still another suggestion was that the differences be referred to the English Wesleyan Methodist conference for arbitration, each side agreeing beforehand to abide by the decision.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps the most widely discussed plan, however, was one that appeared at various times and places in slightly different form, and consisted of several elements, according to which steps should be taken to free Bishop Andrew from all connection with slavery. Farther, if there was an abolitionist in the college of bishops he should resign; and both sides should agree that hereafter neither slaveholders nor abolitionists should be elected to that high office.<sup>39</sup> Dr. Bond seemed to find hope in this proposal.<sup>40</sup>

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36 "R. C. A.," August 8 and Sept. 5, 1844. Compare this curious idea with Calhoun's later suggestion of a dual presidency of the United States to solve this selfsame sectional problem in the nation. Calhoun, J. E., "Calhoun's Works," I. 392.

37 Smith, "Andrew," 370-71.

38 "C. A. and J.," March 12, 1845.

39 A prominent advocate of this plan was W. A. Booth of Tennessee. "N. C. A.," August 23, 1844, quoted in "Great Secession," 367-68.

40 "C. A. and J.," Oct. 2, 1844. "Upon the whole, it would seem that the basis of a safe and righteous compromise has been laid

While a multitude of such plans was offered, and old plans appeared again and again in slightly different dress, they had no chance of acceptance. If received favorably by one side they were inevitably rejected by the other. Some rejected on principle every form of compromise suggested.<sup>41</sup> The South was pretty sure the time had passed, and New England opposed compromise because she was anxious to get all slaveholders out of the church.<sup>42</sup> The episcopal proposal of postponement for four years, made at the General Conference, was perhaps the most practical and simple compromise plan offered during the entire controversy, and that had failed. Doubtless even that would have meant but a respite, not a cure.<sup>43</sup>

Just a year after the convening of the General Conference of 1844 the convention of the slaveholding conferences met at Louisville, Ky., to consummate the work of separation. They regarded the Plan of Separation as their *Magna Charta*, and on it they

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down. Let the Southern Churches consent to preserve the Episcopacy free from all connection with slavery, as it has heretofore been." Commit all action on slavery to the annual conferences. Buy Mrs. Andrew's slaves.

41. "R. C. A.," Sept. 5, 1844. In this issue Editor Lee said, "Talk of compromise *now*! It is a mockery of the tears and prayers poured forth so fully and so freely in the Lecture Room of the Greene Street Church by the Southern delegates.... It adds another curl to the proud lip of Abolitionism!"

"S. C. A.," Aug. 16, 1844. Editor Wightman said, "The time of compromise has gone by forever."

"W. C. A.," Nov. 29, 1844. Editor Elliott, while praising the friends of compromise and wishing them God speed, saw no hope of success for them.

42 "Z. H.," Oct. 9, 1844, quoted in "Great Secession," 372; "Z. H.," Jan. 15, 1845; "R. C. A.," Feb. 13, 1845 (copied from "S. C. A.").

43 For other material on compromise at this time see also "C. A. and J.," Aug. 7, Sept. 4 and Oct. 9, 16, Dec. 4, 18, 1844 and Sept. 3, 1845; "R. C. A.," Sept. 5, 1844 and Jan. 9, 1845.

built, carrying out the unmistakable will of southern Methodism. It was a harmonious occasion—a real love feast. There were nearly one hundred delegates present; and three bishops, namely Soule, Andrew and Morris, attended the opening. On the first day of the session they were asked to preside. Bishops Soule and Andrew accepted, but Bishop Morris felt he must decline.<sup>44</sup> Early in the session a Committee on Organization was appointed to consider the propriety of a separate church. The committee was composed of two men from each annual conference represented and upon it fell the real work of the convention.<sup>45</sup> No sooner had its work begun than its enemies in northern Methodism began (as the southerners thought) to misrepresent it. A reporter for “The Western Christian Advocate” informed his paper that the combat in the convention had commenced. He represented the leaders as determined on division, which they thought would come easily, but the great question was arising, Would the leaders be sustained by their people in this work?<sup>46</sup> This same paper learned somehow that a private movement was on foot to see who, in Louisville, favored the old church. The ministers of the city sent a memorial to the convention calling its attention to this allegation and denying knowledge of any hostile activity.<sup>47</sup>

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44 “Official History,” 169-71, 173-75. There is an extensive account of the convention in 68 “Niles’ Register,” 167-68, 187, 201-202. See also “R. C. A.,” May 15, 22, 29, June 12, 1845. In “R. C. A.” there are summaries of the debates.

45 “Official History,” 176-77. The chairman of the committee was Henry B. Bascom of Kentucky.

46 “R. C. A.,” May 22, 1845, (editorial correspondence of L. M. Lee); “W. C. A.,” May 9, 1845.

47 To be sure these denials prove nothing alone but they are backed by the enormous votes which the proposals to separate received in the convention and in the South generally. Most of these reports appeared in the early days of the convention.

Other stories equally, or more certainly, groundless were abroad.

On May 5 several resolutions were passed instructing the Committee on Organization on various points. One resolution asked the committee to inquire if anything had happened within the year to make continued connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church possible; another suggested leaving the road open for a later reunion on proper terms; a third requested the committee, in case no sign of the receding of the North from its position should appear, to report in favor of renouncing the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the General Conference.<sup>48</sup> For eight days this last proposition was debated. Old arguments were dressed up afresh and given again and again. There was practically no opposition. Some delegates thought that a little opposition would have been a helpful diversion, creating a healthy excitement and interest in the body.<sup>49</sup> May 13, one member, fearing that wrong impressions had already gone out from the long debate, asserted that the subject had been sufficiently discussed; the public would think the debate meant wide differences of opinion when really perfect harmony prevailed; and unless some delegates from border conferences wished to speak he would move that the debate stop.<sup>50</sup>

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48 "Official History," 178-79.

49 "R. C. A.," May 22, 1845. The Editor in his correspondence to his paper said, "As yet, not a breath of opposition to separation or a doubt of its absolute necessity, has been heard. Indeed, a little opposition, if from a source entitled to consideration, would have the effect of producing a healthful excitement in the body. . . . Everything is progressing quite harmoniously, and with regular and certain steps to a plan of distinct ecclesiastical jurisdiction."

50 "Ibid.," May 29, 1845. "Official History," 183. It was said that the long debate was to present to visitors both lay and clerical the true state of affairs.

Several border members took this opportunity to express their views. They were in general accord, they said, with the South but reported their fields to be greatly agitated; they feared that, if they adhered to the North where slaveholding conferences were not wanted they would be intruders. Others were sure the border would throw in its lot with the South but not without much local dissension and discord.<sup>51</sup>

On May 15 the report of the Committee on Organization was read. The address which forms a part of the report fully embodies the views of the convention.<sup>52</sup> Of the seven resolutions at the end of the report the first is most important. It is the formal declaration of independence of the southern portion of the church. It solemnly declared the jurisdiction of the General Conference over the annual conferences in the South entirely dissolved, but adopted the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with all its doctrinal, moral, ecclesiastical and economical regulations with such verbal alterations only as were necessitated by the fact of a distinct organization. The style and title of the new church was to be: The Methodist Episcopal

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51 "R. C. A.," May 29, 1845. In this issue the remarks of several members from border districts are reported. See especially the remarks of Messrs. Kavanaugh, Stringfield, Patton, Monroe, Harrison, Pitts, Brock, Crouch, Harris and Brush.

52 This report appears in full in "R. C. A.," June 5, 1845. (11 columns). It is also in "Official History," 207-33; and in Redford, "Organization," 434-82.

Its leading ideas are very familiar to the reader by this time; separation would be legal as it was based on the Plan; it was morally sound as it would save the church in the South; neither side could recede as each acted on principle; Christ let civil matters alone and the Discipline had always allowed for the civil law; now the North refused to do this; the South could not agree that the six short restrictive rules in the Discipline were the whole of the constitution of the church; recent General Conference action made the southern ministry an inferior caste; all favored continued union of the states, but the North had departed from its old conservative policy.

Church, South. This important act passed by a vote of 95 to 2.<sup>53</sup> The second resolution in this set, expressing a hope for fraternal intercourse between the two churches, passed unanimously.<sup>54</sup>

Thus another momentous step was taken in the disruption of American Episcopal Methodism. A new church, similar in all important respects to the parent church was set up in the South, as the logical and inevitable consequence of the forces we have studied. Like the later Confederacy which adopted the United States Constitution almost without change, the new church made verbal changes only, in the old Discipline. Changes would have been inconsistent as the South held in both instances that the fundamental laws, civil and ecclesiastical, if correctly interpreted and understood, fully guaranteed their rights, vindicated their claims and sanctioned their acts. In the southern General Conference,<sup>55</sup> Petersburg, Va., (May, 1846), futile at-

53 "R. C. A.," May 29, 1845; "Official History," 187-88.

54 When the report was taken up as a whole, the vote on it stood 90 to 2, (five absent). Redford, "Organization," 486. The two negative votes were from Kentucky, (Messrs. Taylor and Harrison). Mr. Taylor tells in a letter to the "Southwestern Christian Advocate," ("Sw. C. A.") June 20, 1845, why he voted as he did: "I voted against division because I was opposed to it in any form. I believed that we needed such checks and balances as the South and North afforded each other, to prevent innovations on the doctrines and especially the usages of the Church. Had the South waited till another General Conference, and that General Conference had refused to make the necessary reparation, I would have voted unhesitatingly for a separation of jurisdiction." He denied being a northern man. He gave his vote from the viewpoint of the church, not from his own personal views. He settled the question of his personal allegiance on personal grounds and adhered South.

Note here the similarity of ideas between the southern opposition to ecclesiastical division in 1844-45 and political secession in 1860-61. In both cases it was rather a matter of *time* than of fundamental difference with the majority. The time to separate or secede had not come yet, but in the minds of these conservatives it might well come.

55 For some account of the organization and early proceedings of the Conference see "Journals General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," (1846), 3-8.



tempts were made to modify the sections on slavery. The border was especially hostile to change. Its delegates had promised that none should be made.<sup>56</sup> This promise was kept, but not without a struggle.<sup>57</sup> In succeeding General Conferences of the southern church—1854, 1858—the struggle against changing the rules on slavery continued against ever-increasing forces, but on the whole successfully.<sup>58</sup> In 1854, however, they agreed upon a very strained interpretation of at least one part of the disciplinary regulations on slavery.<sup>59</sup> The superintendents present at the convention were requested to join the new church, and Bishop Andrew immediately complied. Bishop Soule felt that he must help to carry out the episcopal plan of visitation adopted by the bishops, until the first General Conference of the Church, South, when he would feel free to join them.<sup>60</sup> On May 19 the convention completed its labors and adjourned.<sup>61</sup>

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56 "W. C. A.," May 29, 1846.

57 "Journals, South," (1846), 20, 28, 70-72, 73-75, 96, 100-101.

58 There is practically nothing on the subject in the minutes of 1850. Certainly no action against the rules on slavery was taken. See "Journals, South," (1854), 296, 299-300, 300-301; "Journals, South," (1858), 383-85, 431, 443-44, 444-45, 447-49, 456-60.

At this first General Conference (1846), a delegate was appointed to carry to the approaching General Conference of the old church (1848), the fraternal greetings of its new relative; and an official history of the separation was approved. "Journals, South," (1846), 73-74, 100-101. Matters of finance, editors, publishing house, were also considered and legislated upon.

59 "Journals, South," (1846), 300-301.

60 "Official History," 200-201. How that decision of Bishop Soule's would appear to the Methodist Episcopal Church is quite easy to imagine. We shall have occasion to refer to it more fully at a later time.

61 "Journals, South," (1846), 103.

## Chapter V

### THE METHODIST CHURCH REPUDIATES THE PLAN OF SEPARATION, 1848

There were three distinct classes of happenings growing out of the Plan of Separation and the founding of the new church, namely, the evolution of Methodist opinion leading to the repudiation of the Plan of Separation by the General Conference of 1848; the struggle over the boundary as laid down by the Plan; and the final settlement of the property question in the civil courts. These will now be treated in separate chapters and in the order mentioned. In this chapter attention will be given to the repudiation of the Plan.

As we turn from the course of events in the South to study contemporary conditions in the North, a very different situation confronts us. After the Conference, the path before the Methodists of the South was plain and easy. There was the Plan of Separation, enacted in a fit of christian generosity during the dying hours of the General Conference; and there was the substantial unanimity of the South, both lay and clerical, touching the necessity of separation. To assemble the convention at Louisville with delegates nearly all instructed for division, to organize the new connection, and set its wheels spinning were easy and grateful tasks. In the North everything was different. The delegates returning home from their strenuous labors in New York City, met with anything but enthusiastic

approval. They <sup>1</sup> had sanctioned, if they had not produced, a cruel rent in the glorious fabric of the beloved church; they had surrendered to the pleas and demands of slaveholders and schismatics. Their constituents needed a little time to adjust their thoughts to these surprising developments.<sup>2</sup> The more they thought about it, the more certain it appeared to northern Methodists that they could not approve the Plan, and soon there broke forth a heated newspaper controversy over its expediency and constitutionality. Every aspect of the question was discussed and most of the northern leaders took part.

Accustomed to the conflict of interests around constitutional interpretations in the political life of the country, we should expect to find similar conflicts in the church. Such questions were intricate enough in the political field where judicial interpretation had given a certain definiteness to constitutional principles, but in the church the field of constitutional law was a trackless wilderness in which one could easily get lost. Thus the widest possible differences appeared, without the faintest hope of an authoritative solution. In the first place, the old question so familiar in our political affairs, arose in the church. What was the nature of the Methodist constitution? Had it founded a government of limited powers like the national government, or a government of general powers subject only to a few specific restrictions—the six restrictive rules? In form, at least, it was of the latter type, repugnant as that was to American political instincts

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1 A small minority had vigorously opposed the policy of the Committee of Nine in the Conference. See again the remarks of Griffith and Cartwright, "Debates," 219, 220.

2 For a bitter and unfair attack on the General Conference see letter of Dr. Emory in "Z. H.," Dec. 4, 1844, copied (extracts) from "C. A. and J."

and habits of thought.<sup>3</sup> Obviously it made a great difference when they discussed the powers of the Conference and the validity of the Plan whether the church government was assumed to be a limited one, like our federal government, with powers distinctly specified, or one of general powers with a few stated limitations.

Dr. Bangs of New York, a believer in the constitutionality of the Plan, held that the church government was of the last-mentioned type.<sup>4</sup> Yet he did not follow out this thought with complete consistency, for he believed that the Conference had no right to divide the church, although it is nowhere specifically prohibited from doing so.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Bangs' view was strongly controverted by an anonymous writer who expressed his alarm at such loose doctrines. He urged the next Conference promptly to rescind and disavow the act of the last; he had never intended to join a church with the sort of government Dr. Bangs interpreted the Methodist Church to possess; and he urged his friends never to yield acquiescence, "no not for an hour."<sup>6</sup>

3 The constitution adopted in 1808 when the mass meeting General Conference gave way to the present limited body provides: "The General Conference shall have full powers to make rules and regulations for our Church under the following limitations and restrictions." "Discip." of 1840, 21. Then follows the enumeration of six specific acts the Conference must not do.

4 "Our constitution" he wrote, referring to the church constitution, "differs very materially in some respects from most others. In other constitutions distinct powers are *granted*, and those thus *granted* are specifically enumerated and accurately defined...but in our constitution certain powers which are definitely enumerated, are *withheld*, and all the rest are fully granted." "C. A. and J.," Dec. 3, 1845. For a similar view see Harris, "Powers of the General Conference," 21-23.

5 He held that the Plan did not profess to divide the church, so he was consistent in thinking the Plan constitutional. See his letter in "C. A. and J.," Nov. 27, 1844.

6 He exclaimed, "Do I hear aright? Is it possible that, in this land of Protestant liberty, such a proposal has been seriously advanced by one of the fathers of the Church? I had always sup-

Very few people in the North were able to agree with Dr. Bangs.<sup>7</sup> As the North grew more confident in its belief that the Plan was unconstitutional the South was not slow to charge it with inconsistency in exalting the power of the Conference in the Bishop Andrew case, and minimizing it in discussing the constitutionality of the Plan of Separation.<sup>8</sup>

Another argument relied upon to discredit the validity of the Plan, was that it contravened the fifth restrictive rule, which prohibited the Conference from abridging the rights of trial and appeal guaranteed to ministers and members.<sup>9</sup> This objection was one of the most difficult for the friends of the Plan to meet. Dr. Bangs probably voiced the best answer they could find to it. He argued that the Conference had not abridged the privileges of anyone, nor had it expelled any one; it had simply directed that members remain in the church in their own section. The southern church would still be a Methodist Church. He added also that the church could say where ministers should labor,<sup>10</sup> and that minorities in any case must abide by the decisions of majorities in the church as elsewhere.

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posed the General Conference to be a body of delegated and limited powers. But now we are told, in effect, that they may do whatever they please; for who shall assure us that the day may never come when even the few express restrictions in the Discipline will be overridden by virtue of that supreme 'law of necessity' of which the Doctor speaks?" "C. A. and J.," Dec. 24, 1845.

7. In general, the venerable Dr. Stephen Olin supported the views of Bangs. "C. A. and J.," Sept. 10, 1845.

8 "R. C. A.," Dec. 26, 1844. Of course the argument worked both ways. The South made the opposite shift in emphasis in discussing the two cases.

9 "Discipline" of 1840, 22. The conference "shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee, and of an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society, or by a committee, and of an appeal."

10 "C. A. and J.," Aug. 13, 1845.

Further he warned that some individual distress would necessarily follow any solution of so complex a problem.

Another focus of debate was the third restrictive rule, which withheld from the General Conference the power to destroy the general superintendency, that is to say, modify the ecclesiastical arrangements so as to hinder the bishops from traveling freely over all the connection.<sup>11</sup> The opponents of the Plan said it clearly violated this article; the bishops and preachers were prevented from serving in all parts of American Methodism. On the other hand, it was said that the church had already restricted the episcopacy when it abandoned its jurisdiction over the Canadian Methodists,<sup>12</sup> and had not then thought it illegal. Moreover, would not Methodist bishops and preachers be traveling over the South doing their regular work as before?<sup>13</sup> It was standing on a mere technicality, they said, to see in the Plan a violation of this restriction. Closely related to this objection, was another frequently heard, namely, that the Plan limited the field of ministerial activity contrary to the divine commission which Christ gave to his disciples that they go into all the world and preach the Gospel.

As the argument went on, its inconclusive character grew more apparent. On no recognized authority

11 "Discip." of 1840, 21. They shall not "alter any part or rule of our government, so as to...destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency."

12 See below, pages 110-13.

13 Supporters of the Plan might well have added that the general superintendency was more a theory than a fact anyhow. Bishop Andrew had never appeared or presided at the New England conferences between 1832 and 1844, as the ideal of a *general* superintendency required him to do.

in the church was there imposed the task of passing on the validity of Conference acts. Every sort of opinion arose as to who might exercise that function. As Dr. Bangs observed, it was much easier to say who should not than who should. Slyly rapping his editorial opponents<sup>14</sup> who had already passed adversely on the Plan and were fighting it tooth and nail, he expressed himself as quite sure that editors, who were the servants of the General Conference, had no authority to declare its acts null and void. As far as he could see, the Conference was the sole judge of the validity of its own acts.<sup>15</sup>

Some men guessed that the annual conferences were the true and final judges placed over the General Conference. The Illinois conference was especially sure of the correctness of this guess, stating its views thereon very emphatically.<sup>16</sup> Others were quick to point out the anarchistic tendencies of this particular attempt at improvising a supreme court or rather a series of supreme courts.<sup>17</sup> Incidentally also the reader will recognize here an obvious echo in the ecclesiastical controversy of the issues involved in the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of 1798-99. The state rights philosophy made the Illinois suggestion

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14 Drs. Bond and Elliott, editors respectively of the "C. A. and J." and the "R. C. A."

15 "C. A. and J.," Oct. 22, 1845.

16 Since the Discipline omits to mention where the final judicial power lies, "it follows," says this conference, "that the annual conferences, being the immediate constituents of the General Conference, constitute the natural and proper tribunal and exclusively possess the right to determine as to the constitutionality of the acts and doings of the General Conference."

Then rising to the full height of the dignity and authority thus newly assumed it declared the Plan invalid. "C. A. and J.," Oct. 15, 1845.

17 See "Pittsburgh C. A.," Oct. 22, 1845.

seem natural. The great need of such a court is shown by Dr. Bond's partial endorsement of a scheme to supply the lack. A correspondent<sup>18</sup> suggested a new court to be composed of twenty members, including the bishops, equally divided between the two sections. It was to have an absolute veto on the acts of the General Conference. Another suggestion was that it be given a suspensive veto, which might be overridden by a two-thirds or three-fourths vote of the Conference.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. Bangs and his followers were waging a losing fight. The weight of opposing opinion gradually overpowered them. Some very interesting instances of the evolution of individual opinion appeared. In 1846 Dr. Bond was much more certain of the inexpediency and unconstitutionality of the Plan than he had been in 1844,<sup>20</sup> while Dr. Elliott executed the most spectacular intellectual somersault exhibited during the entire debate. Dr. Elliott had come out very strongly for the Plan when it was before the Conference. It would not hurt the church, he had said. It was scriptural. It was in keeping with good precedents in the ancient church and in the Church of England. It was not sanctioning or condoning a schism but providing for a friendly separation for mutual convenience.<sup>21</sup> He

18 "Conservator" in "C. A. and J.," Oct. 15, 1845. He suggested the high sounding title: The Federal Court of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

19 "C. A. and J.," Oct. 22, 1845. It is interesting to note that this plan made such an impression that an unsuccessful attempt was made in the General Conference of 1852 to get such a court established as part of the permanent machinery of the church. "Journals," III. (1852), 195-96.

20 Compare for example his remarks at the General Conference of 1844 ("Debates," 223-24), and his editorial in "C. A. and J.," June 26, 1844, with his editorial of June 4, 1845.

21 "Debates," 219. See also his editorial in "W. C. A.," Aug. 16, 1844. In the latter he said: "We are persuaded that



was also more willing then to give a wider interpretation to the powers of the General Conference than he was later when the bitterness of feeling between North and South had more fully emerged.<sup>22</sup> The tendency to move with the current of opinion setting in against the Plan affected him along with other northern Methodists, and soon he was as much opposed to it as was Dr. Bond. By April, 1845, he was washing his hands of the separation because of the bad temper and unchristian spirit of the South. His growing disgust at their excesses led him to criticize severely the Louisville convention and to repudiate entirely the Plan he had once praised.<sup>23</sup>

Dr. Elliott's somersault was a source of amusement to the southern editors.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps he has been too severely criticized for changing his mind. If

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distinct organizations must exist in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. We believe the General Conference did right . . . . If the question came up again next week our vote would be the same."

A little later he said: "For ourselves, we are now unwilling to consider them [the southern Methodists] either as schismatics or as even seceders from the Methodist Episcopal Church, and we shall *continue so to think and act* until we are compelled by the necessity of the case to think and act otherwise."

But note that there is a hint of wavering in this editorial. He continued: "We write not these things because we are in favor of separation, as some may suppose. We are not in favor of separation now, nor for the causes on account of which it may now take place." "W. C. A.," Sept. 27, 1844.

22 In controverting a narrow interpretation of Conference powers he practically adopted Dr. Bangs' view of the matter, which opened the way for someone to ask him where he found any restriction prohibiting the Conference from dividing the church or at least sanctioning the division. "W. C. A.," Dec. 13, 1844.

23 See "W. C. A.," June 13, 1845.

24 The editor of the "R. C. A." had already charged him with being a turncoat. For a very striking comparison of his earlier and later views see Scarritt, "Position of the M. E. Ch., South, on Slavery," 36.

circumstances change, a man's opinions may legitimately change also.<sup>25</sup> It is not necessary for our purpose to decide whether or not Dr. Elliott was right. Let us simply note that his change of view was significant of the wider change going on in the attitude of northern Methodism toward the Plan of Separation.<sup>26</sup>

Since there was no supreme court to settle the differences on constitutional interpretation it was natural for the debaters to ransack Methodist history for precedents. The incident which seemed to offer the greatest number of elements paralleling the current struggle was the relinquishment of jurisdiction over the Canadian Methodists by their American godfathers in 1832. Soon after the formation of the Methodist Church in the United States, it developed a missionary interest in Canada. In 1812 Upper and Lower Canada had appeared as parts of the Genesee annual conference. During the War of 1812, a number of American workers had come home and their places had been taken by English Wesleyans. With the growth of the two branches of the Methodist family there, and the rise of a Canadian patriotic feeling, friction had developed to an extent making new arrangements imperative. After considerable hesitation the General Conference, in 1820, had transferred Lower Canada to the Wesleyans.

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25 He frankly recognized his change and attributed it to unexpected developments in the spirit, attitude and aims on the part of the South. "W. C. A.," April 23, 1845.

One might say that Elliott was the Greeley of the Methodist schism. Greeley at first would let the erring sisters (states) go in peace, and later turned to favor a policy of forcing the same erring sisters to remain in the Union. "N. Y. Tribune," Nov. 9, 16, 19, 30, 1860, and Jan. 14, Feb. 2, 1861.

26 For sample resolutions, correspondence, etc., see "Great Secession," 499-514, where a considerable body of material is brought together.

The same divisive forces, added to some personal difficulties, kept alive and increased the discontent in Upper Canada, which had become (1824) a separate annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Petitions had poured in for and against a separation. In 1828, while the Conference had doubted its constitutional authority to divide the church, it had decided that it could allow Methodists on territory outside the United States to form themselves into an independent body.<sup>27</sup> Temporary arrangements had been made until Canadian financial claims could be permanently adjusted. In 1832 at the urgent request of the representatives of Canadian Methodism the Conference had sent around a resolution asking the annual conferences to suspend the sixth restrictive rule of the Discipline to permit a division of the Book Concern property with the new Canadian church. In due time this request had been refused, the opposition having been especially strong in the South.<sup>28</sup> When this vote was reported to the General Conference of 1836 it had provided a mutually satisfactory plan for extinguishing the claims by granting the Canadian Methodists, for sixteen years, a liberal discount on all books bought by them from the publishing house.<sup>29</sup>

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27 The resolutions embodying this decision were passed as a whole by a vote of 108 to 22.

28 In nine typical slaveholding conferences the vote totalled 59 to 384—over six to one—against suspending the rule.

The total vote was 599 for and 758 against. "Journals," I. (1836), 461. The southerners' vote on this occasion was an uncomfortable bit of history for them in 1845.

29 The details of this series of transactions are not easy to unravel, owing partly to errors and ambiguities in both sources and secondary writings. For the material on the subject see: "C. A. and J.," Dec. 6, 1849 (a good general account of the Canadian separation); "C. A. and J.," Nov. 22, 1849 (letter from Dr. Bangs, correcting an error in his "History," III. 389-90, relative to the Canadian affair); Bangs, "History," II. III. and IV. passim; Sutton, "The Metho-

Each side seized upon this episode as furnishing argument that would crush the opposition. Dr. Bond was sure that it could not aid the friends of the Plan. In the first place, he said, the Methodist Episcopal Church never had had a legal existence in Canada. Political exigencies—conditions beyond their control<sup>30</sup>—had forced Canadian Methodism to sever its connection with American Methodism. Then, again, it was said that Canada had been a missionary field, so the church, not having been under the ordinary constitutional limitations there, could allow withdrawal, without establishing a precedent for the separation of integral parts of itself as the southern conferences admittedly were.<sup>31</sup> The fact also that Canada had been only by courtesy a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church *in the United States*, played a role in the controversy.

Those who felt that the incident furnished a conclusive argument for the power of the Conference to pass the Plan of Separation, could make out quite a respectable case. Especially telling was their attack on the missionary field idea. Could the Conference, they asked, cut off members in mission fields without the right of trial secured by the fifth restrictive rule? If such an exception had been intended, it would have been clearly expressed. Suppose Canada had been missionary ground, had not most of the United States also

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dist Church Property Case," 34-42, 166-75, 280, 320, 343; "Journals," I. (1824, 1828, 1832, 1836), see indices.

Dr. Bangs' statement at the Conference of 1844 that the Canadian church had been given \$10,000 is erroneous. See "C. A. and J.," Feb. 7, 1850.

30 "C. A. and J.," Feb. 5, 1845. He noted also that the Canadian Methodists had not set up a new organization taking the name of the parent church as the South had done.

31 "Z. H.," Dec. 18, 1844 (Porter's letter).

been Methodist missionary ground at some time? If that sort of argument made the Canadian separation constitutional it would seem to do the same for the present division. The argument, too, advanced by Dr. Bond, that the grounds of separation were not of Canada's making, but grew out of political conditions beyond their control,<sup>32</sup> came very near to describing the situation in the South in 1844. Dr. Bangs scored a strong point when he said that in transferring Lower Canada to the Wesleyans in 1820, the General Conference did, as a matter of simple fact, find itself possessed of sufficient power to sanction a transfer of societies and buildings to the jurisdiction of another body,<sup>33</sup> even when some of those thus cut off strongly opposed the surgery. The wail from a forsaken southern minority, which was evoking such melting pity from certain editors in 1845, seems to have been quite bearable when coming from Lower Canada in 1820.<sup>34</sup> We know it had been disregarded in 1836 when it came from Upper Canada.<sup>35</sup> Thus each faction professed to find in the Canadian case just what it needed.

This deep difference of opinion on a constitutional question showed itself in more practical ways, through the action of the bishops in drawing up a plan of episcopal visitation<sup>36</sup> for the ensuing four years; and in the voting in the annual conferences on the recommendation from the General Conference, that they concur in

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32 "C. A. and J.," Feb. 5, 1845.

33 "C. A. and J.," Aug. 6, 1845 (letter from Dr. Bangs).

34 I have found no direct evidence that objectors abounded in Lower Canada. The statement is based on the pretty safe assumption that no such transfer could have occurred with the *unanimous* approval of those concerned.

35 For a clear case see "Journals," I. (1836), 452.

36 The regular itinerary of the bishops among the annual conferences.

the suspension of the sixth restrictive rule to allow a division of the church property. The Conference action on the Bishop Andrew case had created a delicate situation for the bishops. It had expressed its sense that Bishop Andrew should desist from the labors of his office as long as his connection with slavery continued.<sup>37</sup> In almost the same breath it had said it considered him still a bishop, and free to choose whether or not he would comply with its wishes.<sup>38</sup> In trying to discharge their duties in view of these somewhat ambiguous actions of the Conference, the bishops found an unfortunate difference of opinion among themselves. They met in New York, June 11, 1844, to arrange the itinerary. All attended but Bishop Andrew. Since the latter had not, apparently, asked for a share of the work or signified his decision on the question the Conference had left to him, most of the bishops did not feel free to include him in their program.<sup>39</sup> From this view Bishop Soule dissented,<sup>40</sup> and an alternative itinerary was prepared to include Bishop Andrew. This was entrusted to Bishop Soule, with the understanding, it is alleged, that if Bishop Andrew applied for work Bishop Soule would publish the second plan and explain the delay.<sup>41</sup>

37 "Journals," II. (1844), 83-84.

38 "Ibid.," 118.

39 They resolved, "It is our opinion in regard to the action of the late General Conference in the case of Bishop Andrew, that it was designed by that body to devolve the responsibility of the exercise of the functions of his office exclusively on himself." Since he had not applied they must leave him out. "C. A. and J.," Feb. 19, 1845.

40 "R. C. A.," Mar. 6, 1845; item copied from "S. C. A." Also Smith, "Andrew," 362-66.

41 "R. C. A.," Feb. 27, 1845. This explanation, published here over the signatures of the four northern bishops, in order to clear up a misunderstanding, agrees substantially with Bishop Soule's letter on the same subject in "R. C. A.," Feb. 13, 1845.

Without publishing this document, though he alleged that Bishop Andrew expressed to him preference for episcopal work,<sup>42</sup> Bishop Soule invited him to assist in the regular work with the southern conferences to which Bishop Soule had been assigned.<sup>43</sup> Bishop Andrew accepted, and concerning Bishop Soule's act a lively debate arose. Had he kept faith with the bishops? Had he gone against the definite wishes of the Conference?<sup>44</sup> It is clear that Bishop Soule placed himself in opposition to his northern colleagues, and while he was doubtless convinced of the complete rectitude of his course, he certainly took the law into his own hands,<sup>45</sup>—an act which was in notable contrast with a theory he expressed a little later.

The expression just mentioned came about in this way. Soon after the meeting of the Louisville convention the bishops, who intended to remain with the old church, voted not to attend or preside at, the southern

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42 "R. C. A.," April 17, 1845, (letter of J. S. Mitchell at the Baltimore conference to the "Nashville C. A.")

43 Soule's letter of invitation is in "C. A. and J.," Dec. 4, 1844. Before receiving this letter, Andrew had decided not to engage in regular work (due largely to the rumors as to the feeling and action of the bishops), but the invitation changed his mind. "Ibid.," see letter copied from "S. C. A."

44 See Dr. Bangs' letter in "C. A. and J.," December 11, 1844, and Dr. Bond's editorial the following week. Soule denied the implication of bad faith, or of a stretch of power. "S. C. A.," Jan. 17, 1845.

45 He appears not to have cared really whether Bishop Andrew had asked for work or not, and here a fundamental difference between himself and his colleagues crops out. "Now suppose," he said, "it were admitted that he did neither [ask or demand work], what then? Why the questions are asked, who *required* that he should do either the one or the other? What *obligation* was he under to do so? By what authority was he required to *ask* or *demand* work of me, or any one of his colleagues? Who gave me or any one of the bishops any superiority or pre-eminence over Bishop Andrew, that he should come to us to *ask for work*, as if we had a right to withhold it from him? Was I not under as much obligation to ask work of him as he was to ask it of me? I know no difference." "C. A. and J.," May 21, 1845.

conferences.<sup>46</sup> This was an eminently sensible measure, and showed a tendency to guide conduct by realities rather than by abstractions. Bishop Soule could not accept this apparently plain and straightforward view of the case. In due time he got a notice<sup>47</sup> of the action of the bishops and also a suggested plan by which Bishop Morris might take his northern appointments if he chose to change his field of labor. Bishop Soule, however, was unable to see the situation as it really was, and based his refusal to agree to the plan upon the ground that it would be something new for him as a Methodist preacher to decline to work where he had been sent by the constituted authority and to choose to work elsewhere<sup>48</sup>—a very fine, loyal sentiment to be sure but rather amusing coming from him. These same constituted authorities had carried little weight when they asked him to give Bishop Andrew work only when he applied for it. Bishop Soule's persistence in carrying out the original scheme of visitation in spite of the action of the Louisville Convention and his relations to it, led to at least one very painful episode when he attempted to preside at the Ohio annual conference.<sup>49</sup> His was a course hard to reconcile with consistency. On the other side the stand of the majority of the bishops on the Plan of Separation was

46 This action was taken July 3, 1845, ("C. A. and J.," July 9, 1845,) and greatly pleased the southern editors, ("R. C. A.," July 17, 1845.)

47 From the other bishops.

48 "R. C. A.," Aug. 14, 1845. "Now," said Bishop Soule, "the truth is, I neither *choose* to change my field of labor, or *decline* attending' conferences assigned me by the 'college' of Bishops.... To *choose* to change my field of labor, or *decline* to attend' the work assigned me by the constituted authorities of the church...would form a new era in the history of my life as a Methodist preacher."

49 "W. C. A.," July 4, 1845 (letter from Peter Cartwright); "Ibid.," July 18, 1845 (Bastian, Weed). The opinions expressed in these letters were evidently general and at the Ohio conference (Sept.,



in striking contrast <sup>50</sup> to the swelling tide of nullification menacing it in the North.

The other series of events which measured this veering of sentiment on the constitutionality of the Plan was the voting in the annual conferences on the recommendation to change the sixth restrictive rule. The voting began in the sessions of the New York annual conference the day <sup>51</sup> after the General Conference adjourned, and continued well into the following spring. <sup>52</sup> A most interesting development revealed in this series of votes was the gradual stiffening of sentiment against the Conference recommendation as each annual conference in order, acted on the question. Those voting first emphatically favored the proposed suspension of the rule, those voting in the intermediate period wavered, while the later ones, including the great majority, decidedly opposed the change. <sup>53</sup> At

1845) the disagreeable episode referred to in the text occurred. "W. C. A.," Sept. 12, 1845.

On the other hand it should be said for Bishop Soule that his course was sanctioned by the South. "S. C. A.," June 20, 1845.

<sup>50</sup> See Bishop Morris' letter to Bishop Andrew, February 19, 1845. Smith, "Andrew," 362-66.

<sup>51</sup> June 12, 1844.

<sup>52</sup> That is, it ended with the voting in the New Jersey conference in April, 1845.

<sup>53</sup> For instance, three conferences voting in June and July stood as follows: June 12, 1844 the New York conference voted 143 yes, 38 no. ("C. A. and J.," June 26, 1844). July 3, 1844, Providence, unanimously yes. ("C. A. and J.," Aug. 7, 1844). July 24, Rock River conference, 45 yes, 10 no. ("C. A. and J.," Oct. 30, 1844).

Three meetings in August and September acted as follows: Aug. 14, Maine conference, action postponed. ("Z. H.," Sept. 4). Aug. 13, N. Ohio conference, 2 yes, 86 no. ("Z. H.," Sept. 18, 1844). Sept. 4, Illinois conference, 22 yes, 38 no. ("W. C. A.," Oct. 4).

The three conferences voting in March and April, 1845, after hearing eight or nine months of heated debate on the constitutionality of the Plan, stood: March 12, Baltimore conference, 40 yes, 148 no. ("C. A. and J.," Mar. 26). April 2, Philadelphia conference, 12 yes, 104 no, absent 21. ("C. A. and J.," April 16, 1845). April 23, New Jersey conference, 2 yes, 110 no. ("Minutes of the New Jersey Annual Conference," 11).

first it looked favorable for the South, then rather doubtful, and finally it became certain that the constitutional change would not be authorized. When the total vote was tabulated there were found to be 2,135 for and 1,070 against it. This was almost exactly two to one in its favor, but the constitution required a three-fourths majority of the delegates.<sup>54</sup> This result, it should be noted, included the nearly unanimous affirmative votes of the southern conferences. The northern conferences however gave a clear majority for the change—1164 to 1067.<sup>55</sup> The outstanding fact, however, was that the recommendation to change the rule had been legally rejected.

Why did the preacher-voters in the northern conferences refuse to authorize the change? Primarily because they were opposed to dividing the church.<sup>56</sup> They were unwilling to have even the appearance of favoring it by lending their sanction to any atom of the Plan.<sup>57</sup> Another influence of unquestioned import-

54 How should the majority be ascertained? This was a controverted point. For the controversy see "C. A. and J.," Nov. 23 and Dec. 11, 1844.

55 "R. C. A.," July 13, 1848. Report of speech by Dr. Durbin in the General Conference of 1848.

56 For one of several hints that the Methodist Episcopal Church was "one and indivisible"—hints suggestive of later developments—see Monroe's Compromise, "C. A. and J.," Sept. 3, 1845.

57 Some opinions expressed by the conferences themselves were as follows:

The North Ohio conference refused to sanction the proposed alteration because (1) the church could only be divided by secession; (2) there was no real necessity for division; (3) the Plan restricted the church to the North in opposition to Christ's command to go out into all the world and preach the Gospel; and (4) to vote the desired change would give the General Conference a permanent power altogether too extensive. "W. C. A.," Sept. 20, 1844.

The Illinois conference opposed the division of the church, but admitted that if division actually occurred, the South ought to have its share of the common property. "W. C. A.," Oct. 4, 1844.

The Baltimore conference gave the following reasons for its vote against suspending the restriction: (1) It wished to do nothing that

ance in achieving this outcome was the violent language employed by the southern primary meetings against the North while the organization of the new church was proceeding. The feeling crops out in the northern Methodist press that it would be highly inexpedient to encourage in any way the formation of a separate denomination so bitterly hostile to the old church.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the belief that the South was violating the Plan in several respects, especially the boundary provisions,<sup>59</sup> and the fear, naturally strongest in the old abolition conferences, that the southern church

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appeared to favor division; (2) to remove the restriction permanently (and there was nothing in the recommendation to show that it was to be temporary) would clothe the Conference with dangerous power; (3) the proposed action would not accomplish the result aimed at, since it authorized merely the apportionment of the proceeds, while the Plan contemplated the division of the capital; but, finally, (4) it disclaimed any wish to cheat the South. "Great Secession," 408-09.

The reaction of the South to the sort of talk found in the fourth item of the Baltimore list of reasons is shown by the editor's comment in "R. C. A.," April 3, 1845: It is due to the Baltimore conference to say that all who spoke denied any intention to prevent a just division of the property, if it should be necessary. Yet how can this be? "There is but one constitutional mode of doing the thing, that mode was submitted to them and they have refused to concur in it by a vote of 151 to 42." (The church newspapers differ slightly as to the exact vote).

Referring to the certain failure of the vote the editor of the "R. C. A." continues at another time: "But will this stay or prevent the division of the church? Not one whit! There is something more than money involved in this question. And dollars and cents can never be suffered to mingle in a question of principle. The Southern Conferences will unquestionably separate, money or no money,—they go for principle not *interest*." "R. C. A.," March 27, 1845.

58 "Z. H.," July 3, 1844. The editor very well stated this feeling: "But the late unqualified recklessness of the South is fast rendering questionable whether it will be morally proper for the North to sanction by liberal largesses, a schism which, however desirable, if properly conducted, is evidently to be...a battery of unceasing hostility and abuse against ourselves." He does not know but that New England from self respect will have to defeat the resolutions.

Later, editor Stevens ("Z. H.," July 17,) advocated the approval of the property division, but not of the Plan.

59 See chapter VI. of the present work.

would perpetuate slavery, were influences tending in the same direction.<sup>60</sup>

Two effective arguments frequently advanced remain to be noticed. It was pointed out that the removal of the restriction as recommended by the General Conference was permanent rather than temporary and would affect the entire future relations of the Conference with the Book Concerns.<sup>61</sup> While possibly the result of an oversight on the part of the framers of the Plan, this consideration led many to vote against the recommendation. The other matter (also an oversight?) was that the conferences were asked to authorize a partition of the *proceeds* of the Book Concerns, while what the Plan really contemplated was a division of the *capital*. Whatever may be our opinions on the relative weight or influence of particular arguments, it is clear that such as they were the mass contributed to one concrete result—the defeat of the General Conference recommendation.

In this state of Methodist opinion, what must be the attitude of the General Conference of 1848 toward the Plan? Coming events cast their shadows before them. We have seen that Editors Bond and Elliott had gone over to the ranks of the nullifiers, the former

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<sup>60</sup> Stevens voices the fear that the new church was to be a slavery stronghold. "Z. H.," July 3, 1844.

On the other hand this fear had another effect that tended to neutralize the one mentioned. The abolitionists often were willing to vote the suspension of the restriction in order to facilitate the severance of the Methodist Episcopal Church from slavery altogether. This influence may help to account for the favorable votes in New England, New York and Michigan, strong abolition regions. Gorrie, "Hist. of the M. E. Church in the U. S.," 111-112.

<sup>61</sup> "R. C. A.," April 24, 1845. Letter of William Wickes explaining his vote in the Baltimore annual conference.

more or less consistently,<sup>62</sup> the latter with a somersault that amused his foes. In January, 1846, Dr. Elliott was writing the Plan down as possessed of no authority whatever, and that, in his opinion, officials of the church should act as if it had never existed.<sup>63</sup> A year later Dr. Bond asserted that the next Conference must repudiate it altogether, that they would not repeal it—for that might be admitting some original validity in it—but that they would declare it unconstitutional and a nullity from the first.<sup>64</sup> It was evident, too, from later developments, that the preachers were with the editors and that the South was by no means blind to the signs of the times. Perhaps the outcome was so unmistakable that Editor Lee was not quite such a marvel as a prophet as he seemed to be in an editorial written about the time the General Conference of 1848 was assembling. He had just had a visit with Dr. Lovick Pierce, the fraternal delegate, elected by the Southern General Conference of 1846<sup>65</sup> to attend that of 1848. As a result he was convinced that Dr. Pierce would not be received. From this he concluded that the Conference would refuse to confer with southern representatives on the property question.<sup>66</sup> The Plan of Separation would then go by the board, the boundary would be erased, and to add new streams of evil the

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62 He was never enthusiastic over the Plan.

63 "W. C. A.," Jan. 30, 1846.

64 "C. A. and J.," Jan. 13 and April 21, 1847.

In January, 1848, ("C. A. and J.," Jan. 12,) the editor asserted that nothing was left of the Plan on account of the false interpretation attached to it by the South, so the North might as well abolish it as illegal from the start.

65 "Journals, South," (1846), 100-101.

66 See chapter VII. of the present work.

southern church would be compelled to appeal to the civil courts to vindicate her property claims.<sup>67</sup>

The General Conference of 1848 assembled at Pittsburgh, May 1, and was soon grappling with the problems bequeathed to it by its predecessor. Of course there were no delegates from the southern conferences, but on the third day Dr. Pierce presented his credentials and stated that he had been appointed to bring to it the christian greetings of the southern church.<sup>68</sup> The Conference thought it unwise to enter just then into fraternal relations with the South, although it extended to the delegate all personal courtesies.<sup>69</sup> Various phases of the separation question came up from time to time, but the important one for our present purpose was that which concerned the validity of the Plan. A committee of the Conference had had the matter under advisement for some days and on May 24 it presented its report.<sup>70</sup>

Although the Conference was overwhelmingly in favor of nullifying the Plan, a notable debate on vari-

67 "To this complexion it will come at last," he concluded. It is a very keen, clear visioned but pessimistic editorial. "R. C. A.," May 4, 1848.

68 "Journals," III. (1848), 16.

69 The report embodying this decision was passed unanimously. "Journals," III. (1848), 21-22.

The essential paragraph is as follows: "Resolved, That while we tender to the Rev. Dr. Pierce all personal courtesies and invite him to attend our sessions, this General Conference does not consider it proper at present, to enter into fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

This decision almost broke the heart of Editor Lee. He felt it was a great blow to spiritual Methodism, and exemplified anything but the spirit of Christ on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church. "R. C. A.," May 18, 1848.

A week later he said he was a much mistaken man if the time was not soon coming "when some of the tribes of this confederacy are constrained to cry out 'to your tents, Oh! Israel!'"

70 "Journals," III. (1848), 68, 73-78, 80-85.

ous aspects of the question occurred. Three or four men from the numerically insignificant minority strongly stated their views. The Plan had been enacted in good faith by Methodist preachers for Methodist preachers. It had been approved by an enormous majority of the chief organ of American Methodism. It had been accepted and acted upon in good faith by those for whom it was intended. Could the church now fairly repudiate it? Perhaps, as some claimed, the Plan was unconstitutional, but that was a matter of personal opinion.<sup>71</sup> There was no authority that could legally declare it invalid. The minority also denied that its validity depended on the votes of the annual conferences with respect to the sixth rule as was sometimes asserted. That vote had sole reference to the division of the property. That the church had persisted in mixing the issues on this point, did not change the facts in the case. Finally, these men denied that the church could act on the supposition that the necessity for separation, alleged by the South, had never arisen. They recalled that the South had been expressly clothed with the right to decide the question of necessity, and insisted that the church must not take back in 1848 what she had given in 1844.<sup>72</sup>

But these views made no impression on the equally good men who honestly believed that the Plan should go. Strong men stepped forward to vindicate the purpose of the majority who believed in the right of the Conference of 1848 to judge whether the fundamental conditions upon which the Plan depended, had been

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71 Some of the opponents of repudiation believed the Plan illegal and inexpedient.

72 For reports of the speeches containing these sentiments see "C. A. and J.," June 7, 1848. For L. M. Lee's argument for the validity of the Plan see his editorial in "R. C. A.," July 6, 1848.

met, and whether its practical operation had deprived any members of the church of their constitutional rights and privileges. They held that if it should appear<sup>73</sup> (1) that there had been no necessity for division, (2) that the South had violated the Plan, (3) that the annual conferences had failed to authorize a division of the property, or (4) that its workings deprived worthy people of their rights as members of the church, then it would not only be right but necessary for the Conference to revoke or nullify the Plan.<sup>74</sup> These views won and by a very large majority the Plan was declared null and void.<sup>75</sup> The feat was accomplished. The billowing tide of opposition had embodied itself in a concrete declaration against the great act of 1844. What judgment, if any, must we pass upon this repudiation?

While it is easy to explain the action of the Conference of 1848, it is not so easy to justify it. True, the church loved its unity and power. It was a pity

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73 No doubt existed in the minds of the majority that these contingencies had arisen.

74 "C. A. and J.," July 19, 1848. Dr. Peck summarized these views in an editorial in this issue. (He had been elected by the Conference of 1848 to succeed Dr. Bond as editor.)

The views of the majority are more extensively set forth in the report of the Conference Committee on the State of the Church, printed in "Journals," III. (1848), appendix H.

75 "Journals," III. (1848), 85. The declaration that it was null and void was carried with only nine votes in the negative. The largest opposition vote on any item in the set of resolutions was 15. The rise and fall of the Plan of Separation, like the experiences in connection with the Andrew case, bore results which embedded themselves in the legal principles of the Methodist Episcopal Church. To-day it is expressly declared to be contrary to the Methodist constitution, either to cut off members without trial or to divide the church. Cooke, "Judic. Decisions," 104-105, (1908).

For a good modern southern discussion of the legal points involved in the question of the validity of the Plan see Tigert, "Const. Hist.," revised and enlarged, appendix IV.



to disrupt such a mighty aggregation of christians. True, the patience of northern Methodists had been sorely tried by the bitterness of southern partisans. True, some in the South adopted too selfish an interpretation of the boundary provisions of the Plan.<sup>76</sup> It may be true, that in the long run repudiation worked good rather than harm in simplifying the situation for both branches of American Episcopal Methodists. Nay, even while we admit for the sake of the argument that the Conference of 1848 had a strict legal right to nullify the Plan, still we find it impossible to contemplate its act with complete approval. The Plan was a wonderful exhibition of christian charity, manifested in a situation as baffling as any that ever confronted a great religious assembly. In that sense the Plan was the glory of a self-sacrificing church. In agreeing to it the church followed closely in the footsteps of its Head. When removed from the mellowing influences of that trying session the North took a more cold-blooded view of the issue; northern Methodists concluded that their delegates had gone too far. Repudiation was born and grew lustily. If the southerners wished to leave let them leave as seceders. This feeling marked a violent reaction from the noble expressions and acts of the General Conference of 1844. Then in 1848 when the partner most vitally interested in the Plan was unrepresented, the other half of the supposedly dissolved partnership, assuming to act as judge in its own case, declared the act sanctioning dissolution unconstitutional, null and void from the start. Admitting the difficulties of the problem, and speaking in all charity, we cannot help feeling that it was a mistake to repudiate the Plan of Separation.

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76 See next chapter.

## Chapter VI

### THE BORDER CONFLICT

In the preceding chapter it was necessary to refer frequently to the boundary controversy that sprang up along the tentative dividing line established by the Plan of Separation between the two sections. It is now time to study this phase of the subject more systematically. In regard to the border the Plan laid down three fundamental principles.<sup>1</sup> (1) The line between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding conferences should be the starting point for all adjustments provided for in the Plan. (2) Societies, stations and conferences on this line, should, by vote, choose the church to which they would adhere, and when this choice had been made, neither the Methodist Episcopal Church nor the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, might exercise any jurisdiction within the bounds of the other. And (3) this power of choice should belong only to the units on the border.

The trouble which this arrangement was likely to provoke was clearly foreseen and pointed out in the General Conference of 1844. For example, Dr. Bond expressed his wonder that the committee should propose such a boundary, for it would foster strife from Delaware to the Ohio River. Several conferences included both free and slave territory, and they were sure to be torn by bitter strife. Since the Conference must abridge rights in any case, let it fix the line once

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1 For the provisions in full see appendix II.

for all on the existing conference boundaries.<sup>2</sup> The doctor's pessimistic predictions proved only too true, for within a year after he had spoken the border quarrel was rocking the churches.

When we read the claims and counterclaims of the parties as their differences grew warmer, we are depressed anew by the obvious impossibility of either side appreciating, even in the slightest degree, the position of the other. The South unquestioningly believed that the North was consciously, openly, wilfully and maliciously infringing the plain provisions of the Plan of Separation regarding the boundary; and the North was equally confident that the South was guilty of similar wickedness. Hence each kept printing certificates of character for the other based on this distorted view of the facts.<sup>3</sup> From the calmer stand-

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2 "Debates," 224. A glance at the map will show how the conference boundaries cut across state lines.

3 Here is a specimen opinion held concerning members of the Church, South, by the Kanawha Quarterly conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

It resolved, "That we are deeply pained and mortified, that the name of Methodism has been so stained by the unchristian and the immoral means used or sanctioned by some of the adherents of the Methodist Episcopal Church South among us, to effect their ambitious project of pulling down the Methodist Episcopal Church to build up a pro-slavery Church, and we can not hereafter have fellowship with those of them known by us to have been engaged in this business, either actively or approvingly, until we have evidence of their contrition and reformation." "W. C. A.," June 19, 1846.

On the other hand a committee of the southern General Conference (1846) reported, that the Ohio and Illinois conferences deliberately violated the provisions of the Plan. "In at least two instances, Presiding Elders, belonging to those Conferences, have invaded the Southern border, and sent preachers to dissatisfied minorities of societies.... And thus the wise and pacific policy of the General Conference of 1844 has been impugned, and its purposes thwarted. And, finally, to cover these revolutionary procedures a hue and cry has been all the while kept up against the Episcopal administration of the South. To say that we are utterly surprised, and deeply mortified at the course which things have taken in

point possible today it becomes evident that in very few cases did either North or South resort to deliberate misrepresentation and deception to gain its ends. Looked at from its own angle of vision, presupposing the ideas, standards and unconscious local interest which each side brought to the determination of specific border disputes, it is obvious that there was no more double-dealing than appears in other and less exciting human differences. Before taking up the facts in any one of the local controversies, let us look for a moment at some of the divergent interpretations which conditioned the local quarrels. The Plan of Separation stated how the boundary should be run. What did that statement mean? How should it be applied? It was capable of more than one interpretation.

The North held that circuits were not included among the favored units of a conference that were permitted freely to choose their section. Men said that the Plan studiously avoided naming them in every enumeration of the favored divisions. Only conferences, societies, and stations were meant, just as it said.<sup>4</sup> To this the South answered that circuits certainly were included because in Methodist usage, circuits, stations and societies were synonymous expressions. No single society, except it be a station, is a pastoral charge to the exclusion of other units in the circuit. The entire circuit is a single charge.<sup>5</sup> Another question arose as

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reference to this subject, is but feebly to express the emotions produced by a view of the facts in the premises. . . ." "Journals, South," (1846), 53.

<sup>4</sup> The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church acted on this view at their meeting Mar. 3, 1847. "C. A. and J.," Mar. 24, 1847.

<sup>5</sup> "Journals, South," (1846), 50-51; "R. C. A.," Jan. 21, 1847 (editorial).

to whether northern conferences on the border must definitely vote to adhere to the North or to the South in order to comply with the Plan. The South was sure that it was forbidden to plant churches north of the line of division only when the territory in question had formally voted to adhere to the North.<sup>6</sup> This was their sole justification for entering a place like Cincinnati for instance. Their opponents replied that the Plan correctly understood, did not require the territory outside the slaveholding conferences to vote at all. If the northern units of the southern border conferences wished to make their choice by vote, well and good, but the southern units of the northern border conferences were not required to vote on the question of adherence.<sup>7</sup> If they did nothing their northern loyalty would be presumed.<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Elliott propounded an interpretation which succeeded at least in amusing the South. He said that in order for a conference to separate legally two dis-

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6 "Sw. C. A.," Jan. 23, 1846. "Law and Order" writing in this paper expressed the idea summarized in the text. It was accepted by the General Conference, South, "Journals, South," (1846), 48-49. In "S. C. A.," (copied into "W. C. A.," May 8, 1846), the editor sanctioned the same interpretation, adding: "it being understood that the ministry of the South, reciprocally observe the same rule in relation to stations, societies, and conferences, adhering by a vote of a majority to the Methodist Episcopal Church." He thought that Ohio being a border conference and having refused to vote one way or the other was open to southern colonization. See also "Sw. C. A." clipping, Feb. 20, 1846, in Elliott's "Scrapbook," IV. 204.

This southern interpretation seems inconsistent with a resolution passed in the Convention of 1845 ("Official Hist." 206) which says societies and stations south of the line named in the Plan would be assumed to belong South, if they neglected to vote.

7 Some Methodists believed that the smaller units north of the line could not, under the Plan, vote to go South, that the voting privilege was confined to the southern units.

8 See letter of "Junius," "C. A. and J.," Nov. 5, 1845.

See Dr. Bond's ridicule of these southern interpretations, "C. A. and J.," Jan. 13, 1847.

tinct sets of decisions must be made. First, the lay members in all the societies of the conference must vote affirmatively on the proposal, and secondly, the preachers must agree, voting as a conference.<sup>9</sup> The two parties also differed on the minor point of a time limit after the expiration of which voting to change denominational allegiance could no longer be allowed.<sup>10</sup>

Another moot question was, What is a border society, and what is an interior society? Is the line relatively fixed or can it change indefinitely by societies, once interior, becoming border through the adherence of the original border society to the other church? For instance, a border society A in a northern conference might vote to join the southern connection. Would that make its neighbor B immediately to the north a border society with the privilege of choosing under the Plan? And if B adhered South could its neighbor C still further north then take its place as a border society or unit claiming border rights, and so on indefinitely?

The North thought the provisions of the Plan applied only to the first unit on either side (some, we noted, said only the south side). The first society or

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<sup>9</sup> For the Doctor's idea fully elaborated see "W. C. A.," Aug. 22, 1845.

Often the South thought it detected serious inconsistencies in the attitude of the North on this border question. The North insisted that the South conform strictly to the Plan, while the North made no secret of its own intention to repudiate the Plan at the first opportunity. "In a case of litigation," continued the editor of the "Sw. C. A.," "before a civil tribunal, a party would hardly be permitted with one breath to repudiate the authority of a given law, and the next to bring up that same law to operate against the adverse party." "Sw. C. A.," Feb. 20, 1846.

<sup>10</sup> See "R. C. A.," Aug. 14, 1845; "C. A. and J.," Mar. 24, 1847 (view of the bishops). See also the Harmony Church case below.

station or conference could choose and that ended it.<sup>11</sup> The South was sure that southern units could choose a northern affiliation one after another until stopped by some unit voting to adhere to the South, and that the northern border societies similarly could vote to go with the South until stopped by some society voting to cast in its fortunes with the North.<sup>12</sup>

As in the case of the dispute respecting the constitutionality of the Plan as a whole there was no recognized authority which could decide once for all the correct interpretation of the border provisions. So the theoretical conflict continued without hope of an authoritative solution. Each stuck gallantly to his chosen view. Neither side could convince the other. Hence honest, well-meaning men unable to appreciate the grounds upon which their opponents acted, came to believe each other dishonorable, and a disgrace to Methodism and christianity.<sup>13</sup> Possibly Dr. Bond had been right. Possibly the fixing of the boundary definitely along existing conference lines would have prevented much hard feeling.

There were almost innumerable local quarrels in connection with this border controversy<sup>14</sup> but they were most violent in three or four districts. Eastern Virginia, or the territory along Chesapeake Bay; west-

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11 Editorial comment on the letter of "A Local Preacher" in "C. A. and J.," Feb. 4, 1846.

12 This was the capital contention of the whole boundary controversy. It had less practical significance than some others but it filled a large place in the religious press.

The point appears very clearly for instance in "Sw. C. A.," Feb. 20, 1846.

13 For an official summary of several of these theories see "Journals, South," (1846), 47-54; "Journals," III. (1848), appendix I.

14 The newspapers are the chief sources of information for these local quarrels, and it often happens that one report flatly contradicts another. By sticking to the statements of fact about which

ern Virginia; St. Louis and vicinity; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Maysville, Ky., were especially strife torn. The bitterest animosity developed on the Eastern shore, or the peninsula of Virginia, including Accomac and Northampton counties.<sup>15</sup> The struggle took various forms. Sometimes it arose from differences of local opinion as to the legality or fairness of meetings called to decide northern or southern affiliation; sometimes it arose over the rights of a given society to act on that question; sometimes it focussed on a legal fight for the ownership of the church building and parsonage; and sometimes non-Methodists mixed in the frays and complicated them, especially where the pro-slavery opposition to the Methodist Episcopal Church was strong owing to its alleged abolitionist tendencies. In the latter form the local conflicts simply offered a convenient storm cradle for the broader political agitation of the day.

A typical case will bring concretely before the reader the situation in this eastern region. The Methodist Church in Salem, a small place on the Eastern shore, was under the pastoral care of Rev. Valentine Gray. These peninsula Methodists had been torn for months by the quarrels of factions working for the North or the South. Both theories and interests clashed.<sup>16</sup> A turbulent element outside the church

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both sides agreed, it is believed that the accounts given in the text are reasonably accurate. Though the material is often scrappy and always controversial, it would never do to omit these sidelights, on which there is as much material now available as there ever will be.

15 On the mainland the three counties of Westmoreland, Lancaster, King George, and the villages of Warrenton and Fayetteville in Fauquier County, were involved as well as some others, but to a less degree. As a rule the conflicts did not grow serious until after the Louisville Convention, 1845.

16 On the whole the peninsula Methodists seemed to be loyal to the Methodist Episcopal Church. In August, 1847, that church still refused to admit that more than one of its societies in that part of



was trying to force the hands of the loyal members and compel them to join the South. This element used mob violence at Salem. On Saturday, July 11, 1846, Pastor Gray met a man from near Salem who told him that trouble was brewing there for the preacher the next day. When he reached Salem Sunday morning he found this to be true, for there was an unusual crowd around the church. Members of the congregation told Gray that they feared trouble. He decided to proceed with the regular services after the Sunday school closed, but had scarcely started when the leaders of the mob entered the building, approached the pulpit and ordered him to leave. He refused, and after some parley, they seized him by the coat and hair, and dragged him out of the meeting house. He was ordered to leave the place and not to return or the consequences would be serious. The next day he went to Eastville where the county court was in session, in order to seek redress. While in the court house he was ordered by some of the mob to leave the vicinity within fifteen minutes. He asked for more time and they allowed him an hour. Thus he was driven off without redress or protection.<sup>17</sup>

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Accomac County attached to the Northampton circuit, had joined the new connection. See preamble and resolutions from Northampton, Philadelphia conference in "C. A. and J.," Oct. 6, 1847. Later there were evident differences of opinion as to what these societies had done. See letter of B. H. Johnson in "R. C. A.," Aug. 24, 1848, for some certificates purporting to tell when and how various societies voted.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was also inclined to ridicule the southern claim that the Eastern shore was border territory. It was divided from the Virginia conference of the southern connection by 35 miles of water. Why, they asked, if this is border, is not Nantucket also border, as only a water boundary separates it from Virginia? (Editorial footnote to Gray's letter "C. A. and J.," Oct. 21, 1846.)

<sup>17</sup> See his calm letter in "C. A. and J.," Oct. 21, 1846. It should be read in full to get the true spirit of the occasion.

The mob represented the common belief that the Methodist Episcopal Church was an abolitionist church and dangerous to the safety and prosperity of the South.

A few weeks later a similar act of violence occurred at Guilford in Accomac county. When Rev. James Hargis was in the midst of his sermon at that place, a mob compelled him to stop by shooting, throwing stones at the building and shouting. He was permitted to leave the church without violence but was warned that if he returned he would be ducked in a neighboring pond. The grand jury, though cognizant of the facts, refused him any redress.<sup>18</sup> This suggests the atmosphere on the eastern end of the long

18 See letter of one of Mr. Hargis' parishioners in "C. A. and J.," Jan. 6, 1847.

In the spring of 1847 a similar outburst of mob violence in Accomac County resulted somewhat differently. Rev. James Brindle was disturbed at his appointment at Bruton's Chapel. By quick work his friends got him into the building, and the baffled mob went away to gather increased strength and return the following Sunday at his next appointment (Garrison's Chapel). There was plenty of excitement through the week and bloodshed was feared. Again, however, the mob was outwitted. The Methodists had gathered a crowd much larger than the mob could muster, and at the critical moment the mob dispersed without doing any damage. See letter from Northampton Circuit, quoted in editorial, "C. A. and J.," May 19, 1847.

By autumn the opposition had grown so strong that Mr. Brindle's own flock reluctantly advised him for his own safety to leave the circuit. "C. A. and J.," Oct. 6, 1847.

Incidentally there is some evidence that as time went on the southern church was making conquests in this region. See resolutions against the ideas of "Anti-Secessionist" passed in Gloucester circuit, Baltimore conference, and published in "R. C. A.," March 20, 1845; also the Eastville circuit, Philadelphia conference, resolutions in reply to the Methodist bishops' decision as to the correct eastern boundary of the Va. conference, in "R. C. A.," June 3, 1847; and resolutions of affiliation with the South passed by the Fredericksburg, Va., society and published in "R. C. A.," Aug. 24, 1848. The determined southern stand of King George circuit, Baltimore conference, is seen in resolutions printed in "R. C. A.," May 6, 1847.

boundary. The spirit of the conflict was significant of the political controversy then rising between the sections. It also affords a more adequate explanation of the repudiation of the Plan of Separation by the General Conference of 1848.

In western Virginia the situation was such as to make that region the real "dark and bloody ground" of the church conflict. Its political and economic relations to the rest of the state, its comparative freedom from slavery, its border character, and its territorial distribution among Methodist conferences<sup>19</sup> combined to make it a district where differences would be acute and complex.<sup>20</sup> As the ecclesiastical controversy raged we are not surprised to see the very significant suggestion made and advocated that western Virginia should disconnect itself from the extremists of both sides, and establish an annual conference of its own extending from the Blue Ridge to the Ohio River<sup>21</sup> a prophecy of the new state to be born into the Union there during the Civil War. Without doubt the religious schism intensified the existing sectional feeling in Virginia and paved the way for the new state of West Virginia.<sup>21a</sup>

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19 See letter from "A Friend of Peace," Barboursville, Cabell County, Va., in "R. C. A.," Aug. 7, 1845.

20 For a brief analysis of opinion in that area, see communication by "W" in "R. C. A.," Aug. 7, 1845.

21 Quoted from the "Lynchburg Virginian" in the "Kanawha Valley Star" and copied from that paper into "R. C. A.," July 17, 1845. The suggestion was made by the "Kanawha Republican" and the editors of the "Star" and the "Virginian" both expressed the hope that Virginia would not be divided.

A western Virginia annual conference was formed in 1848 by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Journals," III. (1848), 97-98.

21a Ambler, "Sectionalism in Virginia," 298-99.

Parkersburg<sup>22</sup> in the Ohio conference was a focal point of discontent. The region up and down the Ohio River from that place, and the Great Kanawha and the Little Kanawha River valleys also experienced much agitation. Mob violence paralleled the similar outbreaks in the east. The question of affiliation North or South came up at Parkersburg, and was decided in favor of the South. Two meetings were held. At the second six resolutions were passed, the most significant one of which (approving the Louisville Convention) passed by a vote of 45 to 17. This was a small vote and a house to house canvass later, undertaken by the minister in charge,<sup>23</sup> indicated 102 members favoring the South and 82 the North.<sup>24</sup> When Mr. Brown went to the regular meeting of the Ohio annual conference in 1845 he reported the society as about equally divided, and the Methodist Episcopal faction as desirous of a preacher as usual. The Rev. John Dillon was sent, and his arrival added to the existing excitement. An old board of trustees was called together, some members of which, it was alleged, were not at the time connected with the church.<sup>25</sup> This board refused to receive a preacher from the Ohio conference, and closed the church against Mr. Dillon. But he forced an entrance in spite of the hostile crowd, and preached. Next day an indignation meeting of the citizens was held, which appointed a committee of

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22 Parkersburg reported 207 white members in Sept. 1844. "Minutes of the annual conferences," III. (1839-1845), 515.

23 Rev. Arza Brown of the Ohio conference—a friend of the North.

24 Eleven others voted to remain *as they were*.

25 These boards of trustees seem often to have been rather somnambulant bodies, which after regular Rip van Winkle slumbers suddenly awoke in times of crisis, and under new circumstances plagued the church they purported to serve, or at least plagued some faction in it.

sixty to wait on Mr. Dillon and order him out of town. The preacher deemed it wise to obey. His predecessor, Mr. Brown, who returned to get his family was threatened with a coat of tar and feathers, but he managed to escape before the humiliating garb was quite ready for use.<sup>26</sup>

This region well illustrated that southern theory of the Plan of Separation which would permit society after society to become border territory with the right to choose its affiliation until stopped by some society voting to affiliate with the other connection. On the theory accepted by the Methodist Episcopal Church, Parkersburg could not possibly be border territory for it was situated seventy-five miles from the border. The South asserted that one society after another, beginning at the original border, had adhered to the new connection, so that Parkersburg had become thereby border territory and possessed of the right to choose. The same charge and defence were used in regard to the Guyandotte society.<sup>27</sup> Years of turmoil were to

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26 See "Marietta Intelligencer" accounts, reprinted in "W. C. A.," Oct. 3, 1845. See also "Sw. C. A.," Oct. 10, 31, 1845.

27 For arguments, assertions, charges and countercharges on the legality of action by the parties in western Virginia, see the following: "N. C. A.," Aug. 28, 1846 (depositions regarding the taking of the votes on affiliation in the Kanawha district); "R. C. A.," Aug. 24, 1848 (Is Parkersburg a border station?—letter of W. D. T.); "R. C. A.," Aug. 3, 1848 (letter correcting the Report of the Conference of 1848 on the State of the Church, respecting the Leesburg, Va., vote of affiliation); "Sw. C. A.," Nov. 7, 1845 (editorial on the southern affiliation of Guyandotte circuit); the same subject is discussed in a letter by "Old Guyandotte" in "Ibid.," Mar. 13, 1846; 68 "Niles Register," 360, Aug. 9, 1845 (evidences of strong Methodist (North) feeling in Guyandotte, Walnut Grove, and Longbranch in the Kanawha district); 68 "Ibid.," 334, July 26, 1845 (strong northern feeling in Wytheville, Va., and in Tazewell, Russell and Scott counties, in southwestern Virginia); "R. C. A.," Aug. 7, 1845 (letter from "Friend of Peace" illustrating northern feeling in western Virginia); "Journals," III. (1848), appendix I. (infractions of the Plan); "Journals, South," (1846), 47-54 (justification of southern border policy).

ensue before anything like equilibrium could be reached in this distracted corner of Zion.<sup>28</sup>

The situation in Cincinnati, Ohio, a border city, caused the spilling of much contentious ink. Here again one cannot feel safe in speaking dogmatically as to all the facts. Nevertheless, it illustrated further the nature and possibilities of the strife. The particular issue concerned the legality of the establishment of a society of the southern church at Soule Chapel. As Methodism had flourished in the city, new societies had been formed to accommodate the membership. In 1844 a city missionary was appointed "*to carry the Gospel to the destitute.*" By permission he exercised pastoral authority over the three small societies formed shortly previous. New chapels were built for two of them. In 1845 the missionary, G. W. Maley, was reappointed, but his pastoral activities were to be confined to Maley Chapel. This limitation was put upon him by the decision of a post-conference council, and as the bishop had to hurry away it was left for the presiding elder, Michael Marley, to inform Mr. Maley. Some three or four weeks later the city missionary board at an informal meeting gave Maley leave to preach in Vine Street Church, an old, deserted edifice in the heart of the city. He received no episcopal permission to form a society, but there was evidently a difference of opinion as to just what authority he had received. A number of Cincinnati Methodists obtained transfer certificates and joined Maley's Vine Street group which, when it had grown to ninety-eight members, voted unanimously to adhere to the South. The proper papers were pre-

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28 The friction resulted in a lowering of the religious tone of western Virginia, a fact which was mourned by earnest men discussing the situation. See letter to editor, "R. C. A.," July 6, 1848.

sented to Bishop Andrew, who, believing the change perfectly regular, recognized it as a society of the southern church under the name "Vine Street charge, a border society." It proceeded then to buy a meeting house <sup>29</sup> in the heart of the Wesley Chapel charge, thus placing itself in such a geographical position in the city that the Bethel charge of the Methodist Episcopal Church separated it from the border.

Regarding these complicated movements the North held (1) that Mr. Maley had acted irregularly as a Methodist preacher in forming a society at Vine Street, (2) that he had no official authority to use Vine Street Chapel for anything but preaching, and (3) that the society not being on the border could not, according to the Plan, select its denominational home. It is evident that there was chance for misunderstanding on the first two points, since the action of the post-conference council limiting Maley's charge geographically was not directly communicated to him; and, regarding the use of the Vine Street house, it was quite possible that the informal action of the local missionary board had been misinterpreted. Let us note that in Cincinnati we have an application of that aggressive southern interpretation of the Plan of Separation which allowed the South to enter any unit north of the tentative line which had neglected to declare its continued allegiance to the old church. Since the Ohio conference had omitted to do this, it was therefore legally open to southern enterprise. It would not matter to the South whether Soule Chapel was a border unit or not. Thus, though relatively a small affair, the Cincinnati wrangle clearly illustrated some of the cross-

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29 Soule Chapel (?)

currents of opinion on the boundary provisions of the Plan.<sup>30</sup>

At St. Louis,<sup>31</sup> Mo., and Alexandria,<sup>32</sup> Va., notable dissensions arose but they bring nothing new to the picture already before us. Incidents of a different character that illustrated the bitter feelings of the time were the presentments of "The Western Christian Advocate" and "The Christian Advocate and Journal" by grand juries, with the object of prohibiting their circulation in certain counties.<sup>33</sup> With this passing reference we shall leave these episodes and close the

<sup>30</sup> The foregoing account of the Cincinnati affair is made up largely from Infractions of the Plan, appendix I. "Journals," III. (1848). That recital has been checked by the parallel though briefer statement in "Journals, South," (1846), 51, 52.

A good idea of the newspaper dispute may be obtained from the following: "W. C. A.," Sept. 5, 1845 (account of meeting to consider the schism); "Ibid.," Oct. 24, 1845 (editorial review of the affair to date); "Sw. C. A.," Nov. 21, 1845 (Andrew's letter recognizing the Vine Street Chapel); "W. C. A.," Nov. 28, 1845 (letter from Marley, showing that the M. E. Vine Street Mission was still loyal and active even if the South had a charge of the same name); "Sw. C. A.," Jan. 2, 1846 (letter from Maley to the "Cincinnati Gazette" about his rights in the various charges in the city); "N. C. A.," Feb. 20, 1846 (editorial on legality of Vine Street affair under the Plan); "W. C. A.," June 26, 1846 (letters from Marley on the informal permission given Maley to use the Vine Street edifice); "N. C. A.," Sept. 15, 1848 (a correspondent, Latta (?), reviews the final report of the Conference of 1848 on the Cincinnati matter).

<sup>31</sup> A southern version of the facts in the St. Louis troubles may be found in "Sw. C. A.," Feb. 20, 1846. A northern view, very ably and clearly stated, may be found in "W. C. A.," Mar. 6, 1846. See also a letter by Joseph Tabor in same. There is a general account of the troubles in Missouri told with marked southern bias, in Leftwich, "Martyrdom in Missouri," ch. V.

<sup>32</sup> The facts in the legal case arising at Alexandria, Va., are stated in a letter to "C. A. and J.," Dec. 13, 1849. The appealed case and decision are found in "Ibid.," July 18, 1850. See also "R. C. A.," May 24, 31, June 7, 14, July 12, 1849.

<sup>33</sup> Under a Virginia statute passed March 23, 1836 under the influence of the early reaction against abolitionist agitation, a grand jury in Wood County presented "The Western Christian Advocate" as a dangerous and incendiary publication, and warned postmasters and



present chapter with some study of the Maysville, Ky., quarrel and its outcome. It is worthy of particular attention for two reasons: (1) it involved a legal contest over the ownership of the local church edifice, thus marking an advanced stage in the history of these unfortunate differences; and (2), the decision of the court foreshadowed the point of view adopted by the Supreme Court of the United States in the final settlement of the larger property question. For these reasons also it affords us an easy transition to the discussion of that larger question in the next chapter.

In those days Maysville, situated in Mason County, Kentucky, on the Ohio River, was a community with a total population, black and white, of 2,741, (1840).<sup>34</sup> The Methodists there reported 281 white members in 1844.<sup>35</sup> This society seems to have lived in perfect harmony until after the meeting of the Louisville Convention. Then its troubles began.<sup>36</sup> Just prior to that convention a vote had been taken to instruct delegates as to local desires in the premises. Only two members had voted for separation. After the events at Louisville, a number of the Maysville members caught the separation fever. Among these were the

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others against receiving and distributing it. See "C. A. and J.," April 29, 1846; "Acts of the General Assembly of Va.," (1835-1836), 44-45. For the presentment of "The Christian Advocate and Journal," by a grand jury of Accomac County see "C. A. and J.," April 21, 1847.

34 "Compendium of the Sixth Census," 72.

35 "Minutes of the annual conferences," III. (1839-45), 522.

If the church roll were properly sifted probably it would not show more than 260 members.

36 In dealing with the Maysville matter we are on much safer ground as to evidence, than in dealing with some of the local affairs discussed in the pages immediately preceding. A complete record of the arguments, and the decision of the court are found in Waller, Hood and Stanton, "The Methodist Church Case at Maysville, Ky." From the facts which each side admitted a reliable narrative can be constructed.

presiding elder, the preacher, and the bulk of the officials. The southern sympathizers were greatly encouraged by the appearance among them of J. Stamper,<sup>37</sup> from the Illinois conference. The other faction was inspired by the arrival of Dr. Tomlinson, president of Augusta College. A notable debate ensued and excitement arose to white heat, the proceedings manifesting the common characteristics of the stormy political contests of the time.

On August 31, 1845, came the regularly called meeting to vote on the subject of affiliation. Previous to the meeting sundry petitions or declarations had been circulated for signature. Some northern sympathizers, it was alleged, had misunderstood the force of these documents, thinking that by signing them they had voted. Owing to this misapprehension they stayed away from the meeting, the formal vote of which was 109 to 97, a majority of 12 for the new connection. But it was not a majority of the whole society.<sup>38</sup> This fact led a northern sympathizer to get the secretary's report and, before it was forwarded to the Ohio conference, to add the names of thirty-three absentee northerners. This addition, he said, made a majority of the whole society favoring the old church. Now each party had some basis for claiming a majority—the South a majority of the formal meeting,

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37 A strong adherent of the southern church.

38 There are slight discrepancies in the accounts as to the total number actually voting in the society, and entitled to vote. Some said 256, others 259, but the point is immaterial.

Each side made the most of its advantages in its attempts to win over the waverers. "Do you wish to leave the M. E. Church?" "Do you prefer an abolitionist preacher from Ohio to one of your own kind from Kentucky?" Such were some of the questions.

A brief announcement of the vote is found in 69 "Niles Register," 72.

the Methodist Episcopal Church a majority of the whole charge.

The annual conference was in session when the amended report arrived, but the bishop,<sup>39</sup> finding the proceedings irregular, refused to send a preacher. Nevertheless, Dr. Tomlinson remained to preach for them. Meantime the Kentucky conference receiving the report of the vote in the formal meeting sent Rev. Mr. Grubbs to shepherd the southern flock. Notices appeared making it evident that unless someone backed down, both Dr. Tomlinson and Mr. Grubbs would be trying to preach in the same church at the same time. A serious clash seemed imminent. Representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church suggested a division of the time, in order to avoid turmoil or worse. The offer was rejected and Mr. Armstrong, a leader among the old Methodists, acting on the advice of counsel, closed the meeting house, securing both doors and windows. Mr. Grubbs and his congregation "quietly"<sup>40</sup> reopened the building and held their services.

Obviously, now, if the Methodist Episcopal Church retained what it thought to be its rights in the Maysville edifice, it must appeal to the courts. To make a long story short, a decree was granted ordering the two parties to use the property jointly.<sup>41</sup> An appeal

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39 While refusing the request, Bishop Hamline suggested that they get a formal meeting and make it clear that they had a majority. They did this, at least to the satisfaction of Presiding Elder Marley of the Cincinnati district, who admitted them into the Augusta circuit of the Ohio conference, and sent Rev. Mr. Lawder to minister to their spiritual needs. Letter of John Armstrong in "C. A. and J.," Feb. 25, 1846.

40 An aggrieved party, telling the story of his persecutions, always reports himself as having done things "quietly."

41 This decree made permanent an injunction to the same effect obtained earlier by Armstrong. His opponents had tried to have it

was then taken by the defeated party to the highest court of the state. There the decision of the lower court was set aside, and the exclusive use of the meeting house given to the South.<sup>42</sup> This decision was handed down July 27, 1847, and in it practically for the first time the whole question of the relations of the two Methodisms, and the validity of the Plan on which so much nebulous and inconclusive argument had been wasted, came under careful judicial review.

Reviewing the earlier history of the church, the schism of 1844, the definite southern choice registered by the Kentucky conference, and the formal vote of the Maysville society to go with its natural geographical section, the judge concluded that the General Conference could legally change the name and organization of the church as circumstances dictated, and that the separation sanctioned by that body in 1844 was valid. He cited illustrations, which, he thought, proved that self-created bodies could provide for their own dismemberment. The Virginia legislature, for instance, was able to dispose of part of its territory even without asking specifically the consent of the people. The General Conference had sanctioned a

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quashed on the ground that they were the legal church in Maysville, according to the Plan of Separation. Letter in "W. C. A.," Feb. 20, 1846.

<sup>42</sup> Gibbon vs. Armstrong, 7 "Ben Monroe," 481 ff.

Sidelights on this case may be found in "W. C. A.," Oct. 24, 1845 (editorial comment on the vote of Aug. 31); "C. A. and J.," Feb. 25, 1846 (long letter from Armstrong); Armstrong also has a letter in "W. C. A.," copied into "C. A. and J.," Aug. 25, 1847, expressing his feelings on the final decision.

Frankfort and Augusta were having hard times trying to decide their church affiliations. The fact that Augusta College was located at the latter place, and that it was presided over by the energetic Dr. Tomlinson, made it a lively center. The southern side of the Augusta, Ky., story is exploited by A. H. Redford in "Sw. C. A.," April 18, 25, and May 2, 1845.

division similar to the one in question in the cases of Upper and Lower Canada.<sup>43</sup> The only condition placed upon the southern conferences was that they should find it necessary to separate, and of that necessity they were made the sole judges. The distribution of the property in the Book Concerns was intended to be a consequence of separation, not a condition on which it should depend. Incidentally the court pointed out that the complainants, by attending and voting at the meeting called to decide on the question of affiliation, implicitly recognized the validity of the provisions under which the proceedings took<sup>44</sup> place.<sup>45</sup>

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43 See above pages 110 ff.

44 The Maysville church in this case spent a large sum of money testing a principle of great importance to the southern connection; and in the earlier stages of the contest it had petitioned the General Conference of 1846 for aid. The Conference had replied by advising a group of border conferences to raise \$100 for the relief of the Maysville congregation. "Journals, South," (1846), 12, 21, 34-35.

The Methodist Episcopal Church also made provision for its faction. "Journals," III. (1848), 117-118.

45 The border controversy gave rise to a whole crop of local church property cases. The Wesley Chapel, Warrenton Circuit, Fauquier County, Va., controversy gave rise to one—Diggs vs. Hume—decided Oct. 8, 1850. See "C. A. and J.," Oct. 24, 1850; and the editorial in "R. C. A.," Nov. 7, 1850, with the article copied from "Piedmont Whig." In this case the court refused to sanction the Plan of Separation and decided in favor of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The churches at Salem and Rectortown in the same county, gave rise to the cases of Brooke vs. Shackett, and Carter vs. Wolfe, (13 "Grattan," 301), decided together May 23, 1856. In these cases the court upheld the Plan adopting the reasoning of the Maysville case and that of the United States Supreme Court in the case of the Book Concerns.

In 1879 the Harmony Church dispute in Loudon County, Va., produced the cases of Hoskinson vs. Pusey, and White vs. King, (32 "Grattan," 428). The Baltimore conference staying in the old connection in 1844-46, seceded in 1861 and remained independent until 1866, when it decided to affiliate with the South. The minority of 1861 meantime had organized a new Baltimore conference loyal to the old church. In 1866 Harmony Church voted to adhere

As was natural, since the court accepted so many common southern arguments and reasoned so directly contrary to northern interests and predilections, the Maysville opinion was widely denounced in the Methodist Episcopal Church. There were hints that the court was prejudiced through the excessive influence of certain well-known southern Methodists.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps the fact that the views of the court were later so largely adopted by the Supreme Court of the United States may tend to offset these assumptions of improper influence. It was something, at least, for a state court to have sketched the broad lines along which these unfortunate differences were to be authoritatively composed.

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to the South. This status was maintained until 1871 when the Harmony Methodist Episcopal minority (northern) asked the courts for relief and for possession of the property then in the hands of the other faction. The southerners professed to act under the Plan of 1844. Their contention was denied by the court and the relief asked for by the minority was granted, on the ground that the Plan had provided for but one separation and must not be made to do duty indefinitely. It also said that the congregation in question was not a border society. The court followed substantially the reasoning of the Supreme Court decision.

46 "Great Secession," 464-66. 612, 613. Dr. Elliott brings together here some facts tending to show that the decision was due to excessive southern influence. H. B. Bascom was president of Transylvania University at Lexington, M. M. Henkle was pastor of the M. E. Church, South, there, and Judge Robinson, ex-chief justice of Kentucky, was professor of constitutional law in the University. Dr. Elliott thinks that these men furnished the line of argument, and influenced the court to adopt it.

## Chapter VII

### THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PROPERTY QUESTION

A large fraction of the Plan of Separation consists of directions for dividing the property of the church. It recommended to the annual conferences that they suspend the sixth restrictive rule in order to allow the distribution contemplated;<sup>1</sup> it authorized the diversion to the new church of all notes and book accounts, real estate, presses and stock in the South, and all rights in the church printing houses, as soon as the constitutional limitation should have been removed. It arranged for the sharing of the Book Concerns (publishing houses) with the southern Methodists and appointed commissioners<sup>2</sup> to administer these provisions of the Plan when the time should come, and a new connection should have become an actuality. Copyrights were to be used in common and the Chartered Fund was to be appraised and a fair share in it paid over to the new church by the Methodist Book Agents in New York.

Thus in meeting with "Christian charity"<sup>3</sup> the grave crisis that had come upon it, the church, or at least the General Conference, seemed to admit the

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1 "Journals," II. (1844), 135-37. See also appendix II. of this work.

2 Nathan Bangs, G. Peck and J. B. Finley were named.

As far as the General Conference had the power it freed all southern meeting houses, parsonages, colleges, schools, conference funds, cemeteries and property of every kind from any future claim on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

3 The expression used in the preamble to the Plan.

equity of the southern claim to a share in all the joint property of Episcopal Methodism. We get the impression that the claim was already recognized and that the annual conferences were asked to readjust the constitutional machinery to allow this claim to be met.<sup>4</sup>

On reaching home the General Conference delegates soon found that the question of dividing the property had merged with the larger questions of the constitutionality and expediency of the Plan as a whole. The resulting clash of variant opinions bore

<sup>4</sup> For a very brief history of the Book Concerns and the Chartered Fund see Whitlock, "The Story of the Book Concerns," 49-51, 58-65.

The Methodist Book Concern was started in 1789 when the American preachers decided to print their own literature instead of importing it from England. They also desired to make the profits of the book sales aid the church. From very humble beginnings the business grew, experiencing many vicissitudes of fortune, moving from place to place for a time, and suffering almost total loss by fire in 1836, after it had been permanently located in New York City. In 1844 its value had grown to three-quarters of a million dollars. The Conference of 1820 had established a Western Book Concern at Cincinnati, Ohio, which also had prospered being valued in 1844, at about \$200,000.

The Chartered Fund had been started in 1784 when the preachers originated what was called "The Preachers' Fund." Its object was to aid superannuates, and the widows and orphans of deceased preachers. A board of nine men administered the Fund and reported the earnings to the Conference.

In 1797 it was incorporated as the Chartered Fund of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, still retaining the objects already stated. It was comparatively a small item in the property question, amounting in 1844 to about \$45,000. For the origin and management of this Fund see also "Journals," I. (1796), 20-22; "C. A. and J.," July 27, 1832; Bangs, "Hist.," II. 44-51.

The sixth restrictive rule which prevented the General Conference from exercising full control over these funds runs as follows: "They shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, nor of the Chartered Fund, to any purpose other than for the benefit of the travelling, supernumerary, superannuated and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows and children." It permits the suspension of this limitation by a three-fourths vote of the annual conferences. "Discipline" of 1844, 22.



upon the subordinate question of property as well as upon the larger issue of which the property question was but a part. As on the questions of boundary and the legality of the Plan, so on the question of property, two radically antagonistic points of view appeared and were vigorously propagated. One northern faction held that the church was morally bound to carry out the agreement implicit, at least, in the Plan. The other held that there was no shred of moral or legal obligation to mutilate the property of the church for the benefit of the South.

All through the quadrennium (1844-1848) and longer this conflict raged, contributing generously to the confusion.<sup>5</sup> Of those who consistently held that the church was bound to divide the property, none put his case more forcibly than did Dr. Bond. Although, as we have seen, he believed the Plan to be unconstitutional, inexpedient and a huge blunder, he had also reached the solemn conviction that the church was not thereby released from the implied promise made in its name in 1844. He expressed his view in an editorial late in 1846.<sup>6</sup>

Just before the Conference of 1848, he explained his views more fully. These may be summarized as follows: (1) The act of 1844 passed the Conference with so near an approach to unanimity as to give reasonable assurance that the annual conferences would comply

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5 Some of the Scottite seceders were ready with reams of free advice to the mother church. They sympathized with the South, asserting that good faith required a division, and deploring the tendency of the church to put the issue on a legal instead of a moral basis. "R. C. A.," Nov. 4, 1847, item copied from "The True Wesleyan."

6 "C. A. and J.," Dec. 2, 1846.

with the request. (2) The annual conferences, while failing to give the constitutional majority,<sup>7</sup> did give a very substantial majority in favor of suspending the rule. (3) The reasons given in some of the annual conferences for refusing to comply just then were such as to encourage in the South a belief that the property would not finally be withheld.<sup>8</sup> (4) The beneficiaries of the property in the South had, through no fault of their own, been deprived of the benefit of that property. (5) The southern membership had been deprived of the aid they had previously received for the support of their dependent pastors and pastors' families, though these members had had no direct voice in deciding the question of separation. And finally, (6) the Book Concerns were after all the product of the joint labors of both wings of the church.<sup>9</sup>

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7 A three-fourths vote was required.

8 The Illinois and Baltimore conferences especially, while voting heavily against suspending the restriction expressly stated that they were not opposed to dividing the property, but did not wish to agree to it before a new church was set up as that would appear to encourage division.

9 "C. A. and J.," March 1, 1848. Dr. Bond wrote: "After calm, deliberate, and prayerful consideration, we have neither seen nor heard anything to change our original opinion, that the property, known as the 'Book Concern' ought to be divided...." The Chartered Fund ought also to be divided.

He used the following illustration: "If my neighbor held with me an equitable interest in a tract of land, and he was to commit upon me an assault and battery, it would not abate by an iota his right in the land, or justify me in keeping him out of the possession, if I had the power. Nor with a Christian, should it make any difference, though there were a legal defect in my neighbor's title, provided justice was on his side. A Christian must be more than *law honest*...." In "C. A. and J.," for Mar. 8, 1848, he suggested a plan for solving the property question. He would have the next General Conference send to the annual conferences another recommendation to change the sixth restrictive rule.

Editor Lee thought this last a hopeless proposal. In his sight the chances for an amicable division of the property were very small. "R. C. A.," Mar. 16, 1848.

At another time Dr. Bond asked<sup>10</sup> whether the traveling preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church could conscientiously take pecuniary advantage of the wrong committed against them by their representatives in passing the Plan of Separation. He thought it clearly impossible to do so and escape the imputation of mercenary motives. For himself he would rather a thousand times that the property should be consumed by fire and his children remain penniless than that they should have bequeathed to them property so tainted.<sup>11</sup>

On the other and more popular side a great wealth of argument was poured forth to prove that no obligation existed to divide the funds. In Dr. Elliott's mind there were four chief obstacles to a division. (1) The funds were placed in the hands of the church for specific objects, and justice required that there should be no perversion of the trust. (2) The South was using

10 "C. A. and J.," April 19, 1848, editorial comment on letter of J. K. Hallock. See also the strong views of "A Member of the M. E. Church" favoring division of the property. "W. C. A.," May 8, 1846.

11 Bond's views were attacked by a writer in "C. A. and J.," April 26, 1848. He asked, What if the South did get the idea that the Conference of 1844 favored division? Was it not due to the erroneous representations of the South as to the southern conditions to say nothing of their being "false, hypocritical and dishonest"? He asked if the North was bound to pay the South for cheating it. The same misrepresentations got the big vote for amending the sixth rule, in the annual conferences. The church would never pass the Plan now that their eyes were opened to the real aims of the South. If the superannuated ministers of the South wanted to get aid from the Book Concern why did they not join a northern conference? True, the membership in the South had had no share in division, so if we divided the funds we should make them content where the southern preachers have put them. Those preachers would then say to us, Well done, good and faithful servants. He attacked Dr. Bond's statement that the South helped to build up the property by reminding him that they had also enjoyed their share of the profits.

They had also, he asserted, left the Methodist Episcopal Church and so had forfeited all claims to its funds.

the funds to produce through their press an unscriptural division of the church. The funds of the church were thus being used to destroy the church itself. (3) If the funds should be divided with the South, then earlier seceders would put in their claims, and future divisions would be encouraged.<sup>12</sup> (4) These funds might be needed to replant true Methodism in the South after the new church should have corrupted and perverted it.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Finley,<sup>14</sup> who will be remembered as a prominent figure in the General Conference of 1844, was a strong opponent of division. On two different occasions at least, he had formally expressed his views, which were briefly as follows: (1) The annual conferences, by voting against the recommendation to suspend the sixth rule, had vetoed the authority of the commissioners so that he as commissioner could have nothing to do with the matter. (2) The General Conference had neglected to give authority to the commissioners to collect the votes of the annual conferences on changing the rule. (3) The official figures could not be obtained since the secretaries of the annual conferences need not (some dared not) announce or disclose the votes. (4) The South had not complied with the conditions of the Plan. (5) There

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12 See note 5 page 149. Is it possible that this secret hope determined in part the sympathy of the Wesleyan seceders? We doubt it.

13 "W. C. A.," Jan. 16, 1846. In the same issue of "The Western Christian Advocate" Mr. Finley expressed the hope that the church would think on this idea, that recognition of this secession might lead earlier seceders to enter their claims. Peter Cartwright also wrote regarding Dr. Bangs' arguments favorable to the legality of the Plan at this time, that the West was growing tired of Dr. Bangs' "sickly peace."

14 Mr. Finley was one of the commissioners appointed under the Plan of Separation to supervise the division of the property.

is no constitutional power either in the General Conference or in the annual conferences to divide the capital of the Book Concerns for any purpose. (6) The proceeds should go to the poor of the Methodist Episcopal Church. They were depending upon them. (7) There was no real need for the South to secede. Secession was the work of ambitious men. (8) Their object in leaving was to maintain the great evil of slavery.<sup>15</sup>

Other arguments appeared in the church press the columns of which fairly bulged with the pros and cons of this and the larger controversy. A few desired that the church should wait; time was a great problem solver. It would be time enough in 1848 or even in 1852 to take up the property question seriously.<sup>16</sup> Some individuals would assent to division if it could be done consistently with christianity and without endangering the church,<sup>17</sup> but the unconstitutionality of the Plan of Separation was argument enough for many who had strong conscientious scruples against doing anything unconstitutional.<sup>18</sup> Dr. Peck said

15 These arguments by Dr. Finley may be found in "W. C. A.," Nov. 13, 1846. See also letters of his in opposition to division in "Ibid.," Jan. 16, 1846. Note also an item copied from "W. C. A." into "R. C. A.," Sept. 16, 1847.

16 "W. C. A.," Jan. 16, 1846; "Z. H.," March 18, 1846.

17 "W. C. A.," Jan. 16, 1846.

18 "S. C. A.," May 14, 1847, editorial.

This idea was frequently expressed in the North, and extorted sarcastic comment from the South. "We are told that intelligent and kindly disposed brethren at the North are beginning to be pressed in *conscience* about the matter [the constitutionality of the division of the property]. Aye conscience; but then it is a tender conscience which sees how awfully wrong it would be to violate the constitution of the Church!! Certain Organs have been grinding dolorous ditties ever and again about *constitutionality*, and *un-constitutionality*, until men of tender conscience begin to be alarmed at the idea of doing an unconstitutional thing! This constitutional difficulty hung

there could be no moral obligation to violate the constitution. Others pointed out that the Canadian case had established the principle that the church could not divide the funds even with the consent of the annual conferences, as no change in the rule could make it apply to carrying property outside of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>19</sup> Matlack, a leader among the Wesleyans, said that the real objection to dividing the funds lay in the reluctance of the Methodist Episcopal Church to recognize in any way a slaveholding church.<sup>20</sup>

This selection of representative views will suffice to bring before us the chief contentions of the two parties in the North. On the one hand, we see the issue placed squarely on the moral obligation laid upon the church by the passage of the Plan regardless of its expediency or even its constitutionality; on the other, we find a variety of arguments, some valid and constituting a real problem for the church, others transparent and unworthy of the great Methodist people and leaders of that day. We can respect an argument based upon a horror of slavery. We can honor men who loved the church and refused to connive at its disruption. We can sympathize with men who feared that schism in the church foreshadowed disunion in the nation. We must recognize, too, the difficulty

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up in the sheets of the *Christian Advocate* like a Medusa's head has been 'shaking its gory locks' at them until they have got so bewildered as not to see that conventional arrangements, mere agreements of human policy and interest, can never come legitimately in bar of the eternal law of moral rectitude. When men talk of conscience, in this way, we give up in despair."

19 Stevens in "Z. H.," Nov. 10, 1847.

20 "American Slavery and Methodism," appendix, 13. See also Finley's article in "W. C. A.," copied into "R. C. A.," Sept. 16, 1847, where the same idea appears.

created by the failure of the annual conferences to change the rule, whereby they absolutely tied the hands of the church. We can admit a certain validity, from their own point of view, in the contention of those who had succeeded in eliminating the Plan entirely from their thought, and who could thus reiterate the otherwise absurd argument that the southern Methodists had simply seceded, and being thus ordinary schismatics, were entitled to no share in the property of the church they had forsaken.<sup>21</sup> We say that we can respect these arguments, but when we turn to others we feel less respectful. When men argued seriously that the funds should go to the needy preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, dependent upon them, we may ask how that need gave them any right to double their original income by taking the share of the southern preachers. When they could say that 1848 or 1852 would be soon enough to consider a division of the property; that there could be no moral ground for violating the constitution; or when they could say with Mr. Finley, (in answer to the southern commissioners in 1846) that he and his fellow commissioners had no power to collect the votes of the annual conferences on changing the rule and so had no official knowledge of the result;<sup>22</sup> when men could

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21 To this same class, also, the view was perfectly tenable that if they divided with the South all previous secessionists were likely to apply for their share. One would like to remind those people of the fact that there really was a Plan of Separation, and that the mere mention of it absolutely bars the claims of all who had been so unfortunate as to leave the church without such a charter from the General Conference

22 Note the inconsistency of this argument with another used by Mr. Finley. First he said he would have no part in the division of the property as the annual conferences refused to change the rule. Secondly, he said, in effect, that the commissioners not having the power to canvass the vote did not know how the conferences had voted. See page 152 above.

talk in this strain, we conclude that consciously or unconsciously, they were quibbling. Any admirer of the Methodist Episcopal Church could well wish that these arguments had not been used. Plenty of critics arose to chew scornfully on so tempting a morsel—a church arguing lamely and inconsistently, apparently in order to retain money.<sup>23</sup>

With the refusal of the annual conferences to suspend the rule, which rendered it impossible to divide the property legally, the church was placed in a very difficult position. Although it had admitted in 1844 through its representatives that the South had a just claim against the property, it was now legally unable to act on that admission. Hence the church was unceremoniously dragged by the South into a lawsuit, and the legal limitations, which it had itself refused to remove, were ruthlessly removed for it by the civil courts. The steps leading to this consummation we must now study.

For some time there was nothing for the commissioners appointed under the Plan to do, as the new connection was not immediately formed. The Louisville Convention<sup>24</sup> decided not to appoint similar commissioners just then, but it advised the coming General Conference (1846) to appoint them<sup>25</sup> as soon as they could be useful. When the southern General

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23 A strong feeling of church unity and a desire to save it had much to do, as we have said, in defeating the General Conference recommendation to change the rule. The sturdy unionism of the Old Northwest both ecclesiastically and nationally is well typified in the "Autobiography" of Peter Cartwright, the rough and ready old traveling preacher, whenever he touched on slavery, the schism, the national union, or the property question.

24 May 1, 1845.

25 "Official Hist.," 180-181, 189.



Conference met<sup>26</sup> the New York Book Agents (managers of the Book Concern) advised it that they would be unable longer to apportion any part of the profits to the South.<sup>27</sup> This decision called forth<sup>28</sup> a protest and some free advice to the Agents by the Conference. The finance committee to which had been referred the question of property and the task of suggesting the best means of securing to the South her property rights,<sup>29</sup> recommended that three commissioners<sup>30</sup> be appointed whose duty it should be to act with those appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church<sup>31</sup> to adjust all matters pertaining to the division of the church property and funds. They were to notify their northern colleagues of their readiness to act, and, if no settle-

26 Pittsburgh, Pa., May 1, 1846.

27 "Journals, South," (1846), 14. They proposed to retain and invest the money pending the action of their General Conference in 1848.

In October, 1845, the Book Agents at New York decided to send to the South its quota of the proceeds, since these had been apportioned in the previous January, and before the meeting of the Louisville convention. "W. C. A.," Nov. 14, 1845.

28 See "Journals, South," (1846), 30-34, for the reply of the Conference to the Agents, regretting that the Agents felt that their duty compelled them to withhold the funds. It also charged them with violating the Plan. Three objections were offered, to the course pursued by the Agents:

(1) It was assumed that the annual conferences had refused to change the restrictive rule. Why had the Agents failed to get official returns on that vote?

(2) The Plan specifically provided that until the division was completed, the South should "share in all the net profits of the Book Concern."

(3) The failure of the method proposed by the General Conference to give the South its rights did not invalidate those rights.

29 "Journals, South," (1846), 10-12. It will be noted that the sessions of the southern General Conference occur every four years: 1846, 1850, 1854, etc., while those of the Methodist Episcopal Church occur every four years: 1848, 1852, 1856, etc.

30 They were Messrs. H. B. Bascom, A. L. P. Green and S. A. Latta.

31 Messrs. Bangs, Peck and Finley.

ment could be obtained before, they were to attend the General Conference of 1848 in the interest of the South. As a last resort they were empowered to take such measures as might seem appropriate to effect a settlement, if after due time, none was reached in co-operation with the North.<sup>32</sup> Accordingly on August 2, 1846, the southern commissioners addressed to those of the North a request for an early conference to take up the task assigned to them.<sup>33</sup> A reply, penned by Mr. Finley, refused the request adding that the northern commissioners could have nothing to do with the matter.<sup>34</sup>

Direct negotiations with the northern commissioners thus proving abortive nothing was left for the southern commissioners but to await the assembling of the General Conference of 1848, and attend its sessions in accordance with their instructions. When it met they preferred a request for some one to be authorized to treat with them on the property question. This request was referred to a committee which reported that since no returns had come to it from the annual

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32 Rev. J. Early was made Agent, to receive the funds, according to the terms of the Plan. "Journals, South," (1846), 96-97.

33 Apparently expecting an unfavorable reply they had proceeded in the request to argue the question. They thought, if no clear evidence had come to the northern commissioners that the General Conference recommendation had failed they should act as if it had carried—a pretty large assumption. They argued also that if the vote were counted properly—counting those present and voting, and not counting such conferences as the Baltimore and Philadelphia at all—the recommendation would be found to have passed. They contended further that the proposed change in the rule was only a means to an end and that the South intended to use the funds for the same objects that the old church had put them to. Finally, they said that peace required that the question be settled soon. Dr. Bangs was urged to call a meeting. "R. C. A.," Dec. 31, 1846.

34 We noted this answer in summarizing opinions on the property question (page 152). See his letter in "R. C. A.," Dec. 31, 1846.

conferences regarding the vote on the recommendation of the preceding Conference, it could do nothing. The committee did, however, call upon the Conference to get such returns as soon as practicable and it arranged for a subsequent meeting with the southern representatives. The report on the votes proved that the recommendation had failed; the Conference thus found its hands completely tied and the southerners had to depart unsatisfied. The doctrines adopted by this Conference, the repudiation of the Plan and the rejection of the friendly advances of Dr. Pierce, the fraternal delegate from the Methodist Church, South, greatly depressed and discouraged the southerners.<sup>35</sup>

Although unable to meet directly the requests of the South the Conference by no means ignored the problem. The members freely recognized that it would be unchristian to do so. They wished to meet the demands in some fair way. They were handicapped by the vote of the annual conferences and by the fact that they represented an opinion in the North opposed to dividing the property or to admitting in any way the validity of the Plan of Separation. Truly they were in a predicament. How could they extricate themselves and at the same time carry out the wishes of their constituents, and avoid the charge of avarice? The net result of their united cogitations was the following scheme:<sup>36</sup> Expressing their desire to go as far as their constitutional powers would permit,<sup>37</sup> they authorized (1) The Book Agents at Cincin-

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35 For the communication of the southern commissioners and the Conference action thereon see "Journals," III. (1848), 43-45, 47-48; "Journals, South," (1850), 334.

36 "Journals," III. (1848), 94-97.

37 The following quotation from the preamble will show the spirit of the Conference: "And whereas, our *common* and *holy*

nati to submit the whole dispute to voluntary arbitration, if, upon consultation with legal counsel, the Agents found they possessed the power to do so. (2) If this plan proved impossible and the South began legal proceedings the Agents might propose an arbitration under the authority of the court. (3) If the first plan proved impracticable and no suit was begun, the annual conferences should be appealed to again to suspend the sixth rule in order to allow the submission of the southern claims to voluntary arbitration.<sup>38</sup> These provisions laid down the principles which governed the conduct of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the property question until it was settled in the courts.

The southern press was quite skeptical about this program. From their point of view it was full of kinks. The Conference admitted that it had no power to arbitrate and thus it could confer no such power on the Agents. The plan depended upon too many contingencies to bring a real solution. If a voluntary arbitration decided against her, the Methodist Episcopal Church had neither the power nor the desire to carry out the mandate. Then too, the southern critics pointed out that no time limit was placed upon the Agents who might purposely delay the business in-

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Christianity prescribes and enjoins the most pacific measures for the settlement of all matters in dispute between individuals, as well as associations of professing Christians, and the whole Christian world will expect ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ to adopt the most peaceful and conciliatory measures for the settlement of any claim that may be urged against them :

“And whereas, this conference desires to advance, as far as its constitutional powers will authorize, toward an amicable adjustment of this difficulty : therefore” . . . .etc. “Ibid.,” 94.

38 In case the last contingency arose the bishops were instructed to bring this recommendation before the annual conferences.

definitely.<sup>39</sup> The Methodist press replied effectively that these criticisms did not take sufficient account of the legal limitations under which the General Conference (1848) had acted.<sup>40</sup> But it was admitted also by prominent members of the Methodist Episcopal Church that further attempts to get any change in the sixth restrictive rule were hopeless in the existing state of church opinion.<sup>41</sup>

After the close of the General Conference of 1848, the southern commissioners waited to see what might come from plans perfected there. In September, no proposal of arbitration having yet come from the Book Agents it was decided definitely to bring suit for the

39 "R. C. A.," July 13, 1848, editorial. There were plenty of hints in the southern press that the North was not acting in good faith. This particular editorial contains some.

Plans were as plenteous as the frogs of Egypt. None "meet the sincere desire to dignify the injustice of the pre-formed decision against the claim of the South, and to appease the popular sentiment by a plausible affectation of anxiety to overcome, not the difficulties of the question, but the real difficulty of parting with the property." The scheme is got up to bamboozle the people. "R. C. A.," June 8, 1848.

Speaking of a comment by Dr. Elliott in "W. C. A.," regarding the reference to the annual conferences, after arbitration was found to be illegal, under the plan of the Conference of 1848, Editor Lee said: "Can it be possible the Editor thinks the public mind can be again cajoled as it was by the trickery scheme of arbitration? The South was never deceived by the pretensions to arbitrate put forth at Pittsburgh. We doubt whether the Editors can a second time impose upon their own people. 'The subject will now be brought before the annual conference' etc. Faugh." "R. C. A.," Feb. 1, 1849.

40 Perhaps the South felt that those limitations were there through the fault of the annual conferences, and through their fault only. There had been chance enough to remove them if they had really wished to do so.

41 See Dr. Durbin's reply in "C. A. and J.," Aug. 30, 1848, to the critics of the General Conference. He said that the hopelessness of trying to change the rule was admitted in conversation between the southern commissioners and the northern sub-committee at the Conference.

The editor of "C. A. and J." also thought the three-fourths majority a hopeless one to obtain when any basis of doubt existed. "C. A. and J.," May 10, 1849, editorial.

funds,<sup>42</sup> but the proceedings were not instituted at once. Meantime the New York Agents had learned that they had no legal power to offer voluntary arbitration; and under date of December 28, 1848, they apprised the southern commissioners of the fact.<sup>43</sup> The grand scheme had failed then as the South had predicted it would, and a wail of despair, deeply tinged with anger and sarcasm went up from that section of the country.<sup>44</sup> Editor Lee was sure that it was all part of a deep-laid plot to defraud the South and he urged an immediate appeal to the courts.<sup>45</sup>

Since voluntary arbitration was impossible and since no suit had as yet been started, it therefore became the duty of the bishops to present the General Conference recommendation to suspend the sixth rule, to the annual conferences in the North. They were voting during the spring of 1849. The Baltimore and Philadelphia conferences agreed unanimously to suspend the rule.<sup>46</sup> The New England, Troy, Black River and Providence conferences rejected it.<sup>47</sup> The

42 "N. C. A.," Sept. 15, 1848.

43 The communication is in "Methodist Repository," from which it is copied into "C. A. and J.," Jan. 25, 1849.

44 "Methodist Expositor," June 6, 1848, copied by "R. C. A.," Jan. 18, 1849. "Thus, in one single sentence, after eight month's delay, the Book Agents in New York and Cincinnati have forever blasted all hopes of an amicable adjustment of the property question." "This announcement of the Agents must settle the question with us all. The spell is broken; the die is cast; and no one can longer doubt the design of the Northern Church. The veil of gossamer has been removed, and the actors in this scene are naked and open to the view of a gazing world."

45 "R. C. A.," Jan. 25, 1849.

46 "R. C. A.," April 5, 1849, (the vote in the Baltimore conference was 133 to 0); "R. C. A.," April 26, 1849, (Philadelphia conference vote).

47 "R. C. A.," April 26, 1849, (Providence conference 29-48); May 17, 1849, (New England conference 30 to 63); June 21, 1849, (Troy conference, 66 to 79); July 12, 1849, (Black River, 17 to 67);

voting was suddenly stopped by the commencement of the suit begun by the commissioners of the southern church. In thus arresting the progress of the vote and destroying the only means of securing peaceful arbitration, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, brought upon itself considerable criticism.<sup>48</sup> The case involving the New York Book Concern was instituted in the United States Circuit Court for the southern district of New York,<sup>49</sup> and that involving the Cincinnati property in the United States Circuit court for the district of Ohio. For a long while little was heard of the cases.<sup>50</sup> Finally the New York case

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July 26, 1849, (Pittsburgh conference 101 yeas and 1 nay). The last issue noted contains an announcement copied from "C. A. and J.," that the suit had commenced. The proposition was not presented to the Maine conference because the suit had begun. "R. C. A.," Aug. 2, 1849.

48 The voting in the annual conferences again, tended to stir up the old arguments on the property question and germinate a crop of new ones. (1) Some said, All right, since the South has appealed to Caesar, to Caesar let her go. "C. A. and J.," May 10, 1849. (2) Others said (in "Z. H.") that they objected to arbitration as an innovation on Methodism — removing the ancient landmarks — the abandonment of an important feature of their system of church government. Quoted in "C. A. and J.," May 31, 1849, in order to refute it.

The article in "Z. H." is typical of the more unreasonable and superficial views of the time. Dr. Peck (elected by the Conference of 1848 to succeed Dr. Bond as editor of "C. A. and J.") took the writer to task for his tenderness about ancient landmarks, etc. He said that no landmarks were being removed. The proposal required simply a temporary suspension of the Rule. Then turning to Editor Hosmer's remarks in "The Northern Christian Advocate" on the South being a secession, he added that it would subject the church to serious criticism, if it kept putting the South off with the remark, "You are seceders." Nor could the issue be dodged with an exclamation about a "thriftless controversy about money" leaving the other fellow to shift for himself and collect if he could.

49 According to Sutton, "Methodist Church Property Case," 364, it was filed June 15, 1849; according to "Journals," III. (1852), 126, it was filed June 19.

50 The editor of "C. A. and J.," Oct. 31, 1850, complained that he had no news of them.

came up for hearing before Judges Nelson and Betts late in May, 1851.<sup>51</sup> The arguments were very extensive and presented presumably the very strongest case for each side that it was humanly possible to make. While nothing essentially new appeared in these arguments, they presented an index of the positions which the litigants after due consideration had picked out of the mass of current opinions as most tenable and representative. For this reason they are of some significance.

The main arguments for the South were presented by Mr. Lord.<sup>52</sup> They may be considered under three heads. (1) First, he argued that his clients had a right to the property because they had helped to earn it. It was thus no common charity. The conferences held a purely ministerial relation to the fund. They did not own it, and if they used it for any purpose other than the relief of the needy worn-out preachers and their families, they would be guilty of a breach of trust. These dividends were part payment for the work the preachers had so unselfishly performed during the active years of life.<sup>53</sup> (2) Next he attacked

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51 Honorable D. Lord and Hon. Reverdy Johnson appeared as chief counsel for the South, and Hon. Rufus Choate, Mr. Geo. Wood, and Mr. E. L. Fancher for the Methodist Episcopal Church—an imposing array of legal talent. Daniel Webster was retained by the South, but he did not appear at the hearing.

There is a crudely humorous court-room description of Mr. Choate in "R. C. A.," Sept. 4, 1851.

52 His remarks may be found in Sutton, 149-209. Those of Mr. R. Johnson, who supplemented the work of Mr. Lord, appear on pages 325-67. On page 148 there is a summary under eight heads of the points made by the plaintiffs (South).

53 He illustrated the difference between an ordinary charity and the position of the worn out Methodist preachers with respect to this church property, as he conceived it, as follows: "A man comes to me for alms; it is a matter between me and my conscience whether I will give him alms—he has no right. But if a servant, who has



the reason on account of which, according to the defendants, the South had lost this right—namely by seceding and forming a new connection based upon the illegal Plan of Separation. He contended that the Plan was constitutional since there was no provision in the Discipline prohibiting the Conference from dividing or sanctioning a division of the church. The delegated General Conference possessed, like the mass-meeting Conference which existed prior to 1812, all power not specifically denied to it by the restrictive rules. Moreover, there had been but one condition in the Plan which must be fulfilled before the new church could be legally constituted. The condition was that division must be found to be necessary and of that necessity the South had been made the sole judge. The border provisions and the recommendation to change the sixth rule were, according to Mr. Lord, obviously incidental to the main object of the Plan. He gave a careful exposition of the Canadian separation to show that the General Conference had possessed sufficient authority then to sanction the withdrawal of the Canadian annual conferences. (3) He closed with an attempt to prove that the action of the Conference of 1844 in the Bishop Andrew case had furnished a valid reason for the action of the slaveholding conferences, that the necessity had undoubtedly arisen. He recited the long anti-slavery controversy, the fanatical outbursts in New England, the troubled appeals of the bishops to the church to leave abolitionism alone, and the fears frequently expressed by moderate men

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rendered me services during the prime of his days, upon the understanding that I should take care of him in his old age, and I gave him no bond for it, and he has become old and decrepit, the Court will see how different is the application he makes to me, from a man with whom I have had no connection at all." Sutton, 153.

that continued agitation would divide the church. The diverse elements could not all remain contentedly in the church. It was not the Harding and Andrew cases alone, but a long series of disquieting occurrences culminating in them that made unity impossible. Thus the complainants had a real ownership in the funds, for the clauses of the Plan allowing them to join the new connection "without blame" were valid in ecclesiastical law, and the fears of the South in asking for the Plan were amply justified.

The chief argument for the defendants, representing the Methodist Episcopal Church, was made by Hon. Rufus Choate.<sup>54</sup> Although Mr. Choate did not take them up in the same order, his main points were the same as those of the counsel for the plaintiffs. (1) Admitting the peculiar right of the ministry to the funds in question, he believed that this right lasted only as long as those ministers stayed in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and answered to the description contemplated by the rules governing the fund. Merely selling books and thus swelling the profits of the Book Concern gave no particular claim to a share in those profits. To be a worn-out minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church and to continue as such was the sole qualification for participation. The ministers in the new connection could certainly lay no claim to this relation. (2) This brought him to the problem of the Plan. While he contended that the southerners could get no relief, even if the Plan was valid, because

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<sup>54</sup> Mr. Choate's remarks are found in Sutton, 231-291, and those of Mr. Wood, who followed him appear on pages 291-325.

A convenient summary of defendant's points is found on pages 230-31.

they were not members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he admitted that its validity involved a most important issue. If the Plan failed them, they would almost confess the baselessness of their claims. It was undeniably illegal and null and void from the start, said Mr. Choate, because the Conference had no right to pass it. A careful review of Methodist history was undertaken to show this. The church had been founded in 1784 by a constituent body that had never reassembled. Before 1808 the General Conference had been merely an advisory body which had gradually evolved into the chief administrative organ of the church. After 1808 it had expressly denied any authority to divide Methodism, especially in connection with the Canadian experience. Its action at that time had been possible solely because Canada was a foreign country. It had been no such exercise of power as to form a valid precedent for 1844. He admitted that the power to divide the church must reside somewhere but he denied that it resided in the General Conference. (3) But even if the Plan was legal at the start it was now null because the stipulated conditions had not been met. The sixth rule had not been suspended, the boundary line had been violated by the South, and no real necessity for separation was presented by the action of the Conference in the Andrew case. Bishop Andrew had not been deposed nor had the Discipline been violated in any respect. Thus meeting directly the points of opposing counsel, he held that the South had lost all right in the profits of the Book Concern by severing itself from the Methodist Episcopal Church, that the Plan was invalid because the Conference had no constitutional right to enact it, and because the necessity it had presumed had never arisen.

At the conclusion of the arguments counsel for both litigants, as well as the court itself, united in advising an amicable settlement of the case out of court.<sup>55</sup> The suggestion fell upon willing ears. It was easy to see manifest on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church a growing disgust with the position in which it found itself.<sup>56</sup> There is a long standing and commendable prejudice in the christian church against its members settling their differences in the civil courts.<sup>57</sup> The suit over money was felt to be a scandal,<sup>58</sup> and any chance to get out of it honorably was eagerly seized. A correspondence was at once

55 These suggestions are in Sutton, 324, 367, 367-68. Judge Nelson said: "We cannot resist the desire to express our concurrence in the suggestions that have been made by the learned counsel on both sides, that it would be much better for the interests of the Church, for the interests of all concerned, if, after a full and fair investigation, both of the facts and the law in the case, the parties could amicably take it up, and by the aid of friends and counsel, come to an amicable decision of the controversy.... The good feeling and Christian fellowship of the different sections of the Church will be much better by an amicable and friendly adjustment of the controversy than by any legal disposition of it by the Court."

56 This was true even though the church remained convinced that it was in no way to blame for the predicament.

57 See "Discipline" of 1844, 45-47.

58 "C. A. and J.," July 17, 1851, editorial: "The idea of a litigation between two religious bodies, in relation to money, has a rather hard appearance, and always gives occasion to scandal. We have, consequently, always desired that the Southern claims might be settled in some other way.... We would prefer, were it possible, to give the Southern organization all they claim, to a long, tedious litigation. In this, however, we have made no concession to the *legality* or *justice* of the claim."

The "Northern C. A." (see item copied into "R. C. A.," June 12, 1851) said: "We have no pleasure in adverting to this unhappy controversy, and should not now have referred to it, but from the fact that the suit is in progress."

The Buffalo Christian Advocate (see item copied into "R. C. A.," June 12, 1851) said: "For a prorata portion of this money the Southern branch have taken legal measures to obtain...and by the bye, what a humiliating transaction does the whole affair present! Better, in our opinion, if the million of dollars had been swallowed up in the deep."

begun looking toward arbitration.<sup>59</sup> No sooner had it opened, however, than there appeared a chasm of difference that at once doomed the whole beneficent plan. To the Methodist Episcopal Church an arbitration meant that the whole question, including the validity of the southern claim to the property, should be passed upon by the arbitrators. In their view the southern right to any of the property was the only issue. The South could not take this view. It stood squarely on the validity and binding character of the Plan which was based on the admitted justice and equity of her claims. According to the South, the only matter to arbitrate was the size of her share, and the method of payment. From that position the southern church would not be pushed for any consideration. The negotiations deadlocked at once, and the high hopes of the parties for a friendly settlement out of court faded.<sup>60</sup> Evidence multiplies of the widely different grooves in which northern and southern thoughts were flowing and the consequent inability of men to understand each other.

Thus the decision of the case devolved upon the court after all. On November 11, 1851, Judge Nelson read its decision which was in favor of the plaintiffs (South) on every material point. The court accepted almost every one of the familiar arguments for the validity of the Plan, and from that almost as from a hook, the whole case swung. It is unnecessary to follow the judge's argument. We have done so already in the arguments of the attorneys. He decided that

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59 This correspondence is found in "C. A. and J.," Sept. 25, 1851.

60 For a northern view and a southern view of this point see "C. A. and J.," July 17, 1851; "R. C. A.," April 26, 1849.

the superannuated preachers in the southern church were as fully entitled to their share of the profits of the Book Concern as were those of the North.<sup>61</sup> The decision was variously received. The South was jubilant.<sup>62</sup> "Zion's Herald" said that some would lay the defeat of the North to the pro-slavery sentiment prevailing in the region of the trial, but that for the most part the church would accept it as an impartial rendering of the law.<sup>63</sup> "The Northern Christian Advocate" denounced it as a political decision, remarking that the judges as well as the politicians must be allowed to raise a little cotton.<sup>64</sup> The great official organ at New York said that the decision opened the way for the General Conference to make any absurd division in the church it chose. The editor reaffirmed

61 Bascom et al. vs. Lane et al., Brunner, "Collected Cases," I. 348-72; "Federal Cases," No. 1089.

62 Editor Lee of the "R. C. A.," Nov. 20, 1851, found abundant sarcasm for Messrs. Peck, Elliott, etc.

63 "Z. H.," Nov. 19, 1851. The editor himself felt that it gave a most mischievous construction to the economy of the church, unsettling some of the most fundamental securities.

He brought out one of the strongest arguments against the decision. The court, he said, had interpreted the church government to be a hierarchical despotism which needed an immediate overhauling. If it had judged of this power from the absence of restrictions in the written law of the church, the court was excusable, for a large part of the real constitution was unwritten—implied and embodied in usages and precedents, like the British constitution. One must not look merely at the written law.

There is truth in this contention. The preachers would have denied almost unanimously that the church government was in reality what it certainly was in form—a government of general powers subject only to a few specific restrictions. The preachers' views harmonized thus with their political thinking and experience.

As to his charge that the decision made the church out to be a "hierarchical despotism," we may remark that whatever it may be today, the Methodist Episcopal Church of those days was by no means a rampant democracy. Insurgent Methodists had habitually criticized it on this ground throughout its earlier history.

64 Copied into "R. C. A.," Nov. 27, 1851.

his loyalty to the familiar northern doctrines.<sup>65</sup> "The Pittsburgh Christian Advocate," which all through this miserable affray had evinced decidedly moderate tendencies, was inclined to rejoice at the validation of the Plan. The editor considered it a document embodying real christian sentiments, "and worthy to be written in letters of gold."<sup>66</sup>

The Ohio suit involving the Western Book Concern was argued in 1852 and was decided against the southern church. Judges Leavitt and McLean were to have heard the arguments but the latter being a Methodist, refrained, for obvious reasons, from sitting on the case. The court adopted the contentions of the Methodist Episcopal Church in full, finding for it on every point.<sup>67</sup> This decision of course set the southern

65 "C. A. and J.," Nov. 20, 1851. Answering the judge's question as to what the beneficiaries had done to be deprived of their share of the funds, he said, "They have simply ceased to be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church—that is all; and isn't that enough?"—another illustration of the completeness with which some leaders of opinion in the North had eliminated from their thinking the Plan of Separation.

66 Copied into "R. C. A.," Dec. 4, 1851.

"It is," the editor wrote, "a document, after all the fustian and sophistry which have been employed to vilify it, and prove it unconstitutional, which is full of the divine wisdom of christianity, and worthy to be written in letters of gold."

In the "Pittsburgh C. A.," Oct. 22, 1845, also, there is a very interesting editorial favoring the constitutionality of the Plan.

For sharp criticism of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the secular press see "Cumming's Evening Bulletin" on Nelson's decision quoted in "C. A. and J.," Jan. 29, 1852, and controverted by the editor; also remarks of "National Intelligencer's" correspondent quoted in "C. A. and J.," Dec. 4, 1851, and attacked by the editor.

67 The decision is in 5 "McLean," 369-422; "Federal Cases," No. 13112. Among the points made in the decision are the following: (1) The Conference is a delegated or representative body acting under a written constitution. It is a general canon of interpretation in such cases to consider the body a strictly limited one, capable of performing only those acts specifically authorized or implied by fair interpretation. It is absurd to think the church ever intended to

Methodists to complaining in much the same tone that the northerners had adopted at the New York decision. It was due, some said, to lobby influence overcoming clear convictions of moral equity and legal right.<sup>68</sup> Others bewailed the enforced sufferings of widows and orphans who thus lost their chief means of support.<sup>69</sup> Naturally, too, the North was highly elated at the decisive way in which Judge Leavitt sustained its views.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was urged by its supporters to appeal Judge Nelson's decision to the United States Supreme Court.<sup>70</sup> Once it was announced that such an appeal would be made, but<sup>71</sup> the case was never carried up. Judge McLean, a real peacemaker, succeeded in getting the representatives of the two churches to agree on a final settlement. This was the more easily done since an appraisal of the Book Concern by the Master appointed by the Court promised to be a tedious and litigious proceeding. The joint meetings in New York (beginning Nov. 26, 1853) were presided over by Judge McLean. After trying in vain to get the Cincinnati Agents to come into the

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give the Conference power to destroy it. (2) Since the annual conferences refused to modify the sixth rule, the church has no power to apportion the funds. (3) The Book Concern Funds being a charity for a special class, anyone withdrawing from that class ceases to be a beneficiary. (4) Any individual or section may withdraw from the church but can take with them no right to share in the property they enjoyed as members. (5) In withholding the dividends the Agents were guilty of no breach of trust. (6) It is not a case of lapsed charity. The court cannot reconstruct a plan to distribute it. No decree can be given.

68 "N. C. A.," Oct. 28, 1852.

69 "St. Louis Christian Advocate," Oct. 28, 1852.

70 See resolutions of the Milwaukee district ministers' association urging appeal. "C. A. and J.," Jan. 1, 1852.

71 "C. A. and J.," Jan. 22, 1852.



arbitration<sup>72</sup> the eastern Agents went on alone. A series of proposals and counterproposals ended in an agreement satisfactory to both parties. This was embodied in a decree of the court. When the work was completed a most happy interchange of congratulations occurred.<sup>73</sup>

By this agreement the South was awarded \$191,000 in cash and available funds; the printing presses and offices at Richmond, Charleston and Nashville, valued at \$20,000, and debts owed the Concern by southern Methodists amounting to \$64,000—a grand total of \$275,000. The money was to be paid in instalments running into the year 1862.<sup>74</sup> The trustees of the Chartered Fund also came forward and divided with the South at the same time, and their agreement was embodied in the decree. From this source the South obtained about \$17,000.<sup>75</sup> The South appealed<sup>76</sup>

72 They had won their case in the lower court and did not wish to lose that advantage. There was also a question of their legal right to accept the judge's invitation.

73 "C. A. and J.," Dec. 8, 1853.

74 For the New York settlement see editorial in "C. A. and J.," Jan. 19, 1854; and "Great Secession," 726-33. Dr. Elliott said that his account was made up from the minutes of the meetings of the commissioners handed him by the secretary. "Journals," III. (1856), 276; "Journals, South," (1854), 336-38.

High praise was deservedly awarded to Judge McLean for his valuable services as peace-maker. In its later phase the settlement was conducted on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church by commissioners appointed by the General Conference of 1852.

75 "Journals, South," (1854), 337. The exact amount was \$17,052.05, to which was later added \$208.89. "Journals, South," (1858), 502.

76 In "Z. H.," Feb. 8, 1854, there is an editorial quoted from "W. C. A.," in which the action of the trustees of the Chartered Fund is criticized and there is also an implied criticism of the New York settlement without appeal. "Z. H.," "Northern C. A.," and "W. C. A.," all seemed in hearty accord with the Cincinnati Agents in their refusal to settle out of Court. This much may be gathered from the article in "Z. H.," just referred to.

the Cincinnati case which was therefore argued before the Supreme Court of the United States in the spring of 1854. April 24, a unanimous<sup>77</sup> decision in favor of the South was handed down.<sup>78</sup> Judge Nelson wrote and delivered the opinion which naturally followed closely the reasoning of his earlier decision in the lower court. Following now the example of the New York arbitration, the parties got together, agreed on a settlement which was embodied in a decree<sup>79</sup> of the Court. It gave the South \$80,000 in cash and in book stock.<sup>80</sup> This decision and settlement closed the long conflict over the property and also the direct quarrel between the churches which had grown out of the slavery question and the legislation of the General Conference of 1844.

Our task is done. It is a long and crowded era from the beginnings of the abolitionist agitations in New England to the settlement of the property question at the bar of the highest court in the land. The subject fairly glows with hot contention. If one has an interest in seeing either side vindicated there is no lack of valid argument upon which to build an excellent case. Were the ultra abolitionists wise? Was Bishop Andrew fairly and legally dealt with?

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77 Judge McLean again, for reasons already noted, declined to sit on the case.

78 Smith et al. vs. Swormstedt et al., 16 "Howard," 288-313.

79 April 7, 1855.

80 For this settlement see "Journals, South," (1858), 501-502, report of the southern commissioners; "Journals," III. (1856), 249-55, report of the commissioners on the church suit in the West.

The \$80,000 was to consist of \$60,000 cash, and \$20,000 in book stock. The cash was to be paid within five years.

There is a large amount of material and comment on all three cases in Elliott, "Great Secession," 713-816; also "Ibid.," Documents, 74, 75.

Was the South rightly aggrieved at his treatment? Would New England have justly felt aggrieved if the issue had been postponed? Was the Plan of Separation a wise and constitutional means of grappling with the terrifying dilemma? Did it divide, or sanction a division of, the church? Was it wisely nullified in 1848? Should the annual conferences have modified the sixth restrictive rule in 1844-1845? Should the South have delayed the beginning of the suit in 1849 until the second vote on modifying the rule had been completed and counted? Was the Supreme Court decision good law and good morals? Honest men have answered every one of these questions in directly opposite ways.

It is manifest from our discussion that we tend on the whole toward the opinion that the Plan was wise, eminently christian and constitutional,<sup>81</sup> (although we express this view with the greatest diffidence), and that Judge Nelson's decision affirming it worked more complete justice than Judge Leavitt's would have done had it stood. A very large portion of the church felt it necessary to withdraw. The dilemma was not wholly of their making. Had the situation been re-

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81 Many in the northern church felt naturally that the slavery influence in the courts controlled the decision. That there was such an influence in the courts at that time none will now deny, though the fact that the church decision was handed down by a unanimous bench militates somewhat against the view that the slavery influence was all-powerful. However, it may be noted that Judge Nelson was usually in harmony with Chief Justice Taney (Judicial Committee, "Hist. of the Supreme Court," 339-40. There is here a brief biography of Judge Nelson), while Judge McLean usually favored northern interests. As we saw, he did not take part in the case.

Is it possible that his activity in the New York settlement, without appeal, showed that he was not favorably impressed with the Methodist Episcopal Church case? The writer feels that the assumption of pro-slavery influence is not needed to explain the Supreme Court's decision in this case.

versed in 1844, had the Conference been controlled by the South, large sections in the North would have felt with equal keenness the necessity of a separation. The deadlock was painful and overwhelming. Long had they labored together in a grand cause. Now they must part. What more beautiful and christian than that they should mutually agree on a friendly division of the church and its common funds? So thought the Conference of 1844. So thought many noble souls in the North. So we think.

This conflict ended long ago. The leaders and the members of those days have ceased their labors. Most of the issues are dead. The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, live together today on terms of christian fraternalism. Why not close the chasm that still keeps them distinct ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and restore the old-time organic unity? We believe they can. We trust that in due time, and with proper preparation, they will. We wish them success and Godspeed in the attempt.

## Appendix I

### THE CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN 1844

The growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been very rapid. Starting with a mere handful of members in the sixties of the preceding century, by 1844 it had grown to more than 1,000,000.<sup>1</sup> The church also possessed a very efficient and noteworthy polity, to which, as many believed, it owed in part its wonderful success. It is proposed to describe here in outline this constitutional machinery.

The chief organ of government was then (1844), as now, the General Conference, which consisted of a delegate for every twenty-one members of an annual conference. The delegates were elected by the annual conferences. It met once in four years from 1792 on, beginning its sessions on the first day of May and continuing usually about a month. The place of meeting was always designated by the Conference itself. The bishops were *ex-officio* presidents of the body and occupied the chair in turn. The Conference was given a full grant of powers to “make rules and regulations

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1	Whites	1,021,818
	Colored	145,409
	Indian	4,129
	Traveling preachers	4,282
	Superannuated preachers	339
	Local preachers	8,087
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		1,184,064

<sup>1</sup>“Minutes of the annual conferences,” III. 477.

for the church'' under certain restrictions. These restrictions were designated as the six restrictive rules and were in substance as follows: (1) The Conference could not "revoke, alter or change" the articles of religion, or make new standards or rules of doctrine. (2) It could not change the basis of representation, or (3) destroy the general itinerant superintendency, by making the bishops local, or otherwise, or (4) change or revoke the rules of the United Societies, which had come down from the days of Wesley, and regulated the ethical conduct of Wesleyan Methodists. (5) The Conference must not take away the right of ministers and members to trial and appeal; and (6) it "shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, nor of the Charter Fund, to any purpose other than for the benefit of the travelling, supernumerary, superannuated and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows and children." All except the first of these rules might be amended by a concurrent vote of three-fourths of the several annual conferences and a two-thirds vote of the General Conference. Either authority, however, might take the initiative.<sup>2</sup>

Under the General Conference there were in 1844, (May 1), thirty-three annual conferences. The term annual conference had as it still has a double meaning. It denoted a geographical division of the church, and also the annual meeting of all the traveling preachers in full connection within that division.<sup>3</sup> This meeting formed the administrative and judicial body for the

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<sup>2</sup> For the general form and powers of the General Conference see "Journals," I. 88, 89, 90, 93, 95. The ratio was made 1 to 21 in 1836. "Ibid.," I. 496. The method of amendment indicated in the text was adopted in 1832. "Ibid.," I. 378, 383.

<sup>3</sup> For the boundaries of these conferences see map; also the "Discipline" of 1840, 151-158, and "Journals," II. 77-81.

annual conference under the authority of the General Conference. The bishop was the regular presiding officer of the annual conference. Its chief functions were to pass on the admission of preachers to full conference membership, try preachers, annually investigate the character of the preachers, report statistics of membership and contributions, and hear the appointments of the preachers for the ensuing year. These appointments were always made by the bishops.<sup>4</sup>

The episcopacy consisted of a number of bishops fixed from time to time by the General Conference. In 1844 there were five—Bishops Soule, Andrew, Hedding, Waugh and Morris. At the General Conference of that year, two new men were elected to the office—Messrs. Hamlin and Janes. Bishops were elected by the General Conference and consecrated by incumbent bishops or by elders if there happened to be no bishops. Their duties included presiding at the general and annual conferences, fixing the appointments of preachers, receiving, changing and suspending preachers between the sessions of the conferences, traveling throughout the church and supervising its temporal and spiritual affairs. They were responsible to the General Conference which might expel them for improper conduct. They were the sole judges in all questions of law arising in an annual conference. Usually soon after the sessions of the General Conference the bishops convened to map out the travels and visits of each bishop to the annual conferences for the succeeding four years.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Emory, "Hist. of the Discipline." 114-115; "Discipline" of 1840, 23-26.

5 Tigert, "Constitutional Hist.," 389-95; "Discipline" of 1840, 26-29.

The presiding elder was, in effect, a local bishop. He had charge of the preachers and officials within his district, which was a geographical sub-division of an annual conference, and presided at the quarterly meeting conferences—gatherings of the officials of a single charge, or group of societies under one minister. He attended the bishop when the latter visited the district, and between visits the elder kept his superior informed in regard to local affairs. The presiding elders were appointed by the bishops.<sup>6</sup>

The traveling preachers were the center and backbone of Methodism. They bore the brunt of the work of upbuilding and maintaining the church. They were elected after probation, by the annual conference to full membership therein, and consecrated in due form. It was their duty to baptize, administer the Lord's supper and conduct the regular worship of the church. Traveling elders and traveling preachers were synonymous terms.

The smallest unit in the church was the local society, or church, with its congregation, its classes, class-leaders, stewards, exhorters, trustees, Sunday school superintendents, local preachers, superannuated preachers, etc. The superannuated preachers were men who were worn out and had retired; the supernumerary preachers were men who were only partly active, doing only such work under the direction of the annual conference as their strength would permit. The local preachers were men authorized to preach, and who did preach, but who depended for a living upon some secular occupation. This class of men does a

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6 "Discipline" of 1844, 29-32.



large share of the preaching at the present time among the English Wesleyan Methodists.

Such in outline was the economy of the great Methodist Episcopal Church just prior to its disruption. For further detail the reader is referred to Emory, "History of the Discipline," where a full account of the changes up to that time may be found; and to the "Discipline" of 1840 itself, where the doctrines, economy, and ideals of the church are fully set forth.

## Appendix II

### THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF NINE OR THE PLAN OF SEPARATION OF 1844

Whereas, a declaration has been presented to this General Conference, with the signatures of *fifty-one* delegates of the body, from thirteen Annual Conferences in the slaveholding states, representing that, for various reasons enumerated, the objects and purposes of the Christian ministry and church organization cannot be successfully accomplished by them under the jurisdiction of this General Conference as now constituted; and

Whereas, in the event of a separation, a contingency to which the declaration asks attention as not improbable, we esteem it the duty of this General Conference to meet the emergency with Christian kindness and the strictest equity; therefore,

*Resolved*, by the delegates of the several Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled.

1. That, should the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding states find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection, the following rule shall be observed with regard to the northern boundary of such connection: All the societies, stations, and Conferences adhering to the Church in the South, by a vote of the majority of the members of said societies, stations, and Conferences, shall remain under the unmolested pastoral care of the Southern Church; and the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall

in no wise attempt to organize churches or societies within the limits of the Church South, nor shall they attempt to exercise any pastoral oversight therein; it being understood that the ministry of the South reciprocally observe the same rule in relation to stations, societies, and Conferences adhering, by vote of a majority, to the Methodist Episcopal Church; provided also, that this rule shall apply only to societies, stations, and Conferences bordering on the line of division, and not to interior charges, which shall in all cases be left to the care of that church within whose territory they are situated.

2. That ministers, local and travelling, of every grade and office in the Methodist Episcopal Church, may, as they prefer, remain in that church, or, without blame, attach themselves to the Church South.

3. Resolved, by the delegates of all the Annual Conferences in General Conference assembled, That we recommend to all the Annual Conferences, at their first approaching sessions, to authorize a change of the sixth restrictive article, so that the first clause shall read thus: "they shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern, nor of the Chartered Fund, to any other purpose than for the benefit of the travelling, supernumerary, superannuated, and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and children, and to such other purposes as may be determined upon by the votes of two-thirds of the members of the General Conference."

4. That whenever the Annual Conferences, by a vote of three-fourths of all their members voting on the third resolution, shall have concurred in the recommendation to alter the sixth restrictive article, the Agents at New-York and Cincinnati shall, and they are

hereby authorized and directed to deliver over to any authorized agent or appointee of the Church South, should one be organized, all notes and book accounts against the ministers, church members, or citizens within its boundaries, with authority to collect the same for the sole use of the Southern Church, and that said Agents also convey to the aforesaid agent or appointee of the South all the real estate, and assign to him all the property, including presses, stock, and all right and interest connected with the printing establishments at Charleston, Richmond, and Nashville, which now belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

5. That when the Annual Conferences shall have approved the aforesaid change in the sixth restrictive article, there shall be transferred to the above agent of the Southern Church so much of the capital and produce of the Methodist Book Concern as will, with the notes, book accounts, presses, and etc., mentioned in the last resolution, bear the same proportion to the whole property of said Concern that the travelling preachers in the Southern Church shall bear to all the travelling ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the division to be made on the basis of the number of travelling preachers in the forthcoming Minutes.

6. That the above transfer shall be in the form of annual payments of \$25,000 per annum, and specifically in stock of the Book Concern, and in Southern notes and accounts due the establishment, and accruing after the first transfer mentioned above; and until the payments are made, the Southern Church shall share in all the net profits of the Book Concern, in the proportion that the amount due them, or in arrears, bears to all the property of the Concern.

7. That Nathan Bangs, George Peck, and James B. Finley be, and they are hereby appointed commissioners to act in concert with the same number of commissioners appointed by the Southern organization, (should one be formed), to estimate the amount which will fall due to the South by the preceding rule, and to have full powers to carry into effect the whole arrangements proposed with regard to the division of property, should the separation take place. And if by any means a vacancy occurs in this board of commissioners, the Book Committee at New-York shall fill that vacancy.

8. That whenever any agents of the Southern Church are clothed with legal authority or corporate power to act in the premises, the Agents at New-York are hereby authorized and directed to act in concert with said Southern agents, so as to give the provisions of these resolutions a legally binding force.

9. That all the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church in meeting-houses, parsonages, colleges, schools, Conference funds, cemeteries, and of every kind within the limits of the Southern organization, shall be forever free from any claim set up on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as this resolution can be of force in the premises.

10. That the church so formed in the South shall have a common right to use all the copy-rights in possession of the Book Concerns at New-York and Cincinnati at the time of the settlement by the commissioners.

11. That the Book Agents at New-York be directed to make such compensation to the Con-

ferences South, for their dividend from the Chartered Fund, as the commissioners above provided for shall agree upon.

12. That the Bishops be respectfully requested to lay that part of this report requiring the action of the Annual Conferences before them as soon as possible, beginning with the New-York Conference.<sup>1</sup>

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1 "Journals," II. (1844), 135-37.

### Appendix III

#### POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE SCHISM. JOHN C. CALHOUN AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1844

It seems desirable to present a more extensive account of this phase of the subject with more copious extracts from the sources relating to it in the form of an appendix, rather than to burden the footnotes with it.

There can be no doubt as to the widespread character of the sentiment that the ecclesiastical schism endangered directly or indirectly the perpetuity of the federal union. The backwoods preacher, Peter Cartwright, said, "this dreadful rupture in the Methodist Church spread terror over almost every other branch of the Church of Christ; and really, disguise it as we may, it shook the pillars of our American government to the center, and many of our ablest statesmen were alarmed, and looked upon it as the entering wedge of political disunion, and a fearful step toward the downfall of our happy republic."<sup>1</sup> J. F. Wright, of Cincinnati, writing to Bishop Andrew October 3, 1844, said, "I most firmly believe if this division takes place civil commotions will immediately follow, for there are certainly more reasons for the separation of the States than for the division of the church, and it soon might be pleaded as a matter obviously necessary and indispensable to the South."<sup>2</sup> In June, 1844, "The

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<sup>1</sup> "Autobiography," (completed in 1856), 439.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, "Andrew," 371.

Charleston Mercury” hailed the issue of the minority Protest in the General Conference, as possessing high rank “for it marks an epoch—the first dissolution of the Union.”<sup>3</sup> Dr. Wightman of “The Southern Christian Advocate” said that the ecclesiastical division would prove to the country that southern forbearance had its limits, and that abolitionism would be resisted at all costs. “Thus a check will be put upon a movement, which, more than all other causes of discord put together, threatens the political union.”<sup>4</sup> To quote “The Charleston Mercury” again, “The two greatest religious sects in the United States [Baptists and Methodists] sever a union that was thought to be secured by indissoluble ties...and that separation, too, making the precise line between the slaveholding and the free states and growing out of the acknowledged impossibility of the two peoples acting peaceably together.... Mr. Clay<sup>5</sup> sees it in its true light—a dissension that turns one of the strongest bands of the political union into a destroying sword—yet even he shrinks from the expression of more than a dark foreboding.”<sup>6</sup>

Speaking in the United States Senate on the Compromise of 1850, John C. Calhoun said: Many different bands hold the Union together, and these are not wholly political. The strongest of the non-political ties consisted in the unity of the great religious denominations which originally embraced the whole Union. Their unity helped to hold the political union together. “The first of these cords which snapped,

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3 “S. C. A.,” June 28, 1844.

4 “Ibid.,” Nov. 22, 1844.

5 See below.

6 Quoted in 68 “Niles Register,” 188.



...was that of the powerful Methodist Episcopal Church. The numerous and strong ties which held it together are all broke, and its unity gone. They now form separate churches...arrayed into two hostile bodies, engaged in litigation about what was formerly their common property.”<sup>7</sup> Three days later in his famous Seventh of March speech Daniel Webster noticed Calhoun’s reference to the Methodist schism, and expressed himself as having “felt great concern, as that dispute went on, about the result....” He thought the division was needless, but did not say very definitely that he feared serious political consequences.<sup>8</sup>

Writing to a friend in April, 1845, Henry Clay expressed himself positively on the political tendencies of the schism. “A division, for such a cause, would be an event greatly to be deplored, both on account of the church itself and its political tendency.... I will not say that such a separation would necessarily produce a dissolution of the political union of these States; but the example would be fraught with imminent danger, and, in co-operation with other causes unfortunately existing, its tendency on the stability of the Confederacy would be perilous and alarming.”<sup>9</sup>

The fact that Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of State, took an active interest in the doings of the General Conference of 1844, led to a crop of more or less definite charges that he was aiding and abetting the southern delegates in their contemplated separation from the church. These rumors originated from a

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7 “Congressional Globe,” 1st session 31st congress, vol. 21, part 1, 453.

8 “Ibid.,” 477.

9 Colton, “Works of Henry Clay,” IV. (correspondence) 525.

letter which he sent to Dr. Capers of South Carolina, a prominent delegate to the Conference and later a bishop in the southern church. This letter which the Doctor sent for publication in "The Richmond Christian Advocate," and which does not appear in Dr. Jameson's "Calendar of Calhoun Letters" in the "Annual Report of the American Historical Association," 1899, volume II., is as follows: "My dear Sir:—I have felt a deep interest in the proceedings of your conference in reference to the case of Bishop Andrew. Their bearings, both as it relates to Church and State, demand the gravest attention on the part of the whole Union, and the South especially.

"I would be glad if you and Judge Longstreet, and other prominent members of the conference, would take Washington in your route on your return home, and spend a day or two with us, in order to afford an opportunity of exchanging ideas on a subject of such vital importance.

Yours, truly,  
J. C. CALHOUN.<sup>10</sup>

Washington, 4th June, 1844."

Dr. Capers apparently made no secret of the fact that he had received such a letter<sup>11</sup> and even intimated that possibly Dr. Bond in referring to the letter from Calhoun was trying to help out the Whigs in a critical campaign. The posture of political affairs made such a correspondence of deep interest. The question of the annexation of Texas, then being agitated, the political campaign of 1844, the well-known attitude of southern statesmen toward Texas and the Union, the

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10 "R. C. A." Aug. 7, 1851. The invitation was not accepted nor was the letter answered. Wightman, "Life of Capers," 514.

11 "C. A. and J.," Oct. 9, Dec. 25, 1844.

semi-political character of the debates in the General Conference of 1844, all tended to create apprehension and give added significance to the act, when Mr. Calhoun evinced such a lively interest in the doings of the church. It was easy to jump to the conclusion that southern politicians were quietly backing the Methodist minority, and that the division in the church was paving the way for the accomplishment of their half-formed desire for political separation. In an editorial published December, 1844,<sup>12</sup> Dr. Bond said some very interesting things in this connection. Referring to the rising controversy over the relations of Dr. Capers and Mr. Calhoun he remarked: "Let it be remembered that we did not charge him with any *intention* to aid in any project for dismembering the union of the states; but we did express our fears that he might be induced to follow council which would greatly contribute to this end—though the end would not be seen. We believed a division of the Methodist Episcopal Church, especially on the question of 'Southern institutions' would sever an important ligament of our political union, and this opinion very generally obtains; and it was in reference to such division that Mr. Calhoun and his friends were to be consulted. We could be in no doubt as to what the advice would be. We could not be ignorant of what was passing in South Carolina, in reference to a Southern combination to effect certain political purposes, and we entertained the general opinion as to what such a measure would lead. How far the division of the Methodist Episcopal Church was, and is now considered as favorable to the particular views of the dominant party in South Carolina, may be clearly inferred from the fol-

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12 "C. A. and J.," Dec. 25.

lowing extract from the message of the Governor of that State to the legislature now in session. 'Nor is the refusal to ratify this treaty, [annexation of Texas] so vitally important to the South, the only extraordinary proof which the past year has furnished, of the exuberant and rancorous hostility of the North to our domestic slavery. At a meeting in May last, of the General Conference of the Methodist denomination, whose ecclesiastical constitution and government bear, in some respects, a striking resemblance to the political Constitution and Government of this Confederacy, a pious Bishop of the South was virtually deposed from his sacred office, because he was a slaveholder. It was openly and distinctly stated, that the Methodist congregations in the non-slaveholding states, embracing a much larger proportion of the masses than any others, would no longer tolerate a slaveholder in their pulpits; a fact which has been since exemplified. With becoming spirit, the patriotic Methodists of the South dissolved all connexion with their brethren of the North. And for this they are entitled to lasting honor and gratitude from us. Other instances might be cited, not so striking, but equally decisive of the fact, that the abolition phrenzy is no longer confined to a few restless and daring spirits, but has seized the whole body of the people in the non-slaveholding States and is rapidly superseding all other excitements, and trampling on all other interests. It has even been thought that the organized Abolition vote might decide the pending Presidential election; and both parties at the North have been charged with endeavoring to conciliate it for their candidate. While England, encouraged by these movements, and exasperated by our Tariff laws, is making avowed war on us, that she may strike a blow at those who are more our enemies than

her's.' ”<sup>13</sup> The governor, continues Dr. Bond, “evidently looks to the division of our Church as justifying and proving the necessity of the extreme measures he contemplates.” The editor is convinced that this sudden interest of Calhoun in the debates of the Conference, the statements of South Carolina’s governor, and the plans which they were believed to cherish spelled destruction to the political union. He based on this conviction an appeal to Methodists to pause and look at what their schism might be leading to. “Surely they ought to make some sacrifices . . . rather than hazard all the evils, political and ecclesiastical, to which a division may lead. The ecclesiastical consequences have been very distinctly pointed out; but the political and social evils which we may contribute to bring upon our country defy both pen and pencil. He who can contemplate them, even in the distance, with composure, must have not only a hard, but a petrified heart.”

At the time of the Senate debate on the compromise measures of 1850 a writer in “The New York Tribune” signing himself “Sigma,” charged that Calhoun, in his March the fourth speech, in which he referred to the church schism, was deploring an event which he “did all he could to bring about. . . .” He referred the editor of the “Tribune” to the files of “The Christian Advocate and Journal” for an account of the earlier charges against Calhoun and Capers.<sup>14</sup> This item caught the eye of Dr. Capers’ son, F. W. Capers, who happened to be passing through New York City. He at once wrote the “Tribune”

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13 Only one paragraph of the extract is here quoted.

14 “New York Daily Tribune,” June 6, 1850.

denying<sup>15</sup> "Sigma's" charges and assuring him in the most unequivocal terms that they were untrue.<sup>16</sup>

In conclusion we may say that while there was a very lively interest on the part of the South Carolina statesman and his followers in the developments within the Methodist Episcopal Church and that while their well-known sentiments had an important indirect influence, there is no evidence that they contributed much directly toward the disruption of Methodism and the establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

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15 "Ibid.," June 8, 1850.

16 In "R. C. A.," July 17, 1851, the editor (Lee) took issue with an assertion of Dr. Simpson's (in "W. C. A.") to the effect that Calhoun had formed a constitution for a Southern Confederacy before his death and had named it The United States, South. Dr. Simpson had drawn inferences from its verbal similarity to Methodist Episcopal Church, South, insinuating that the church division had been planned as a prelude to political schism.

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Henkle, Rev. Moses M., "The Life of Henry Bidleman Bascom, D. D., LL. D." Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, 1894. (Copyright 1854.) Good general account of his life. Much interesting anecdote and detail. Accounts of his connection with slavery very brief.

Hibbard, Freeborn G., "Biography of Rev. Leonidas L. Hamline, D. D." New York and Cincinnati, 1880. Rather full discussion of his relation to the schism. He was elected bishop at the General Conference of 1844.

Lee, Luther, "Autobiography of the Rev. Luther Lee, D. D." Phillips & Hunt, New York, 1882. An interesting, useful and intimate account of one of the leaders of the secession of 1842-1843. Not to be confused with Luther M. Lee, editor of "The Richmond Christian Advocate."

Matlack, Lucius C., "The Life of Rev. Orange Scott, Compiled from his Personal Narrative, Correspondence and Other Authentic Sources of Information." In two parts. Published by C. Prindle and L. C. Matlack, at the Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, New York, 1847. There are forty-six pages of autobiography and the whole work incorporates much personal correspondence, etc. An illuminating account of an outstanding man.

May, Samuel J., "Some Recollections of our Antislavery Conflict." Boston, 1869.

Olin, Stephen, "The Life and Letters of Stephen Olin, D. D., LL. D." 2 vols. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1853. Valuable for his correspondence with Bishops Andrew and Wightman of the southern church.

Palmer, Walter C., "Life and Letters of Leonidas L. Hamline, D. D." New York, 1866. Some letters on the schism.

Pearne, Thomas H., "Sixty-one Years of Itinerant Christian Life in Church and State." Cincinnati, 1898. Mr. Pearne was an observer at the Conference of 1844. Chapter III. contains a vivid account of the Conference.

Peck, George, "Life and Times of George Peck, D. D. Written by himself." Nelson & Phillips, New York, 1874. A very valuable biography of a key man. Chapters VIII. X. XI. XII. and XIII. are pertinent. Rather extreme in its northern bias.

Rankin, John, "Letters on American Slavery." Second edition, 1836. An excellent summary of the anti-slavery arguments.

Redford, A. H., "Life and Times of H. H. Kavanaugh, D. D." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1884. Largely made up of brief biographies of men who came into contact with Dr. Kavanaugh. Touches the subject in hand chiefly and then only lightly in the bringing of Kentucky into the Church, South.

Ridgeway, Henry B., "The Life of Edmund S. Janes, D. D., LL. D." New York and Cincinnati, 1882. Contains calm comments on the schism of 1844, and on the repudiation of the Plan of Separation by the General Conference of 1848. Dr. Janes was elected bishop at the Conference of 1844.

Rivers, Richard H., "The Life of Robert Paine, D. D., Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Nashville, Tenn., 1884. In chapter XIII. may be found a good brief summary of the struggle of 1844-45. Bishop Paine was one of the prominent southern leaders.

Roche, John A., "The Life of John Price Durbin, D. D., LL. D., with an Analysis of His Homiletical Skill and Sacred Oratory." With an Introduction by Randolph S. Foster. Hunt & Eaton, New York, 1890. Chapter IX. gives some account of the Conference of 1844 and Dr. Durbin's part in it.

Smith, George G., "The Life and Letters of James Osgood Andrew, with Glances at his Contemporaries and at Events in Church History." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1883. A good account of the great bishop's life, containing much original matter; letters, reminiscences, etc.

Smith, George G., "The Life and Times of Bishop George Foster Pierce, D. D., LL. D., with his Sketch of Lovick Pierce, D. D., his father." Sparta, Georgia, 1888. A bulky work containing much correspondence on various subjects but including very little on the questions of slavery or separation.

Stanley, E. J., "Life of Rev. L. B. Stateler; or Sixty-five Years on the Frontier." Nashville, Tenn., 1907. Chapter XVIII., "Some Observations Concerning the Division of the Church," is a fair southern view of the schism.

Stevens, Abel, "Life and Times of Nathan Bangs, D. D." Carlton and Porter, New York, n. d. (Copyright 1863.) Brief references to Dr. Bangs' part in the schism.

Stewart, John, "Highways and Hedges; or Fifty Years of Western Methodism." Cincinnati, 1872. Chapter XXIV. contains some account of the General Conference of 1844 from a moderate northern point of view.

Strickland, W. P. (editor), "Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher." New York, n. d. (Copyright 1856.) Very interesting account of the experiences of the frontier preacher. Delightful—a frontier classic.

Summers, Thomas O. (editor), "Biographical Sketches of Eminent Itinerent Ministers...Pioneers of Methodism, Within the Bounds of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Nashville, Tenn., 1858.

Sunderland, LaRoy, Manuscript Statement on his Relation to the Rise of Anti-Slavery Activity and Theological Education, in the Methodist Church. Made April 22, 1872. Has no real title. It is in the New England Methodist Historical Society Library, Boston, Mass. Very brief.

Tuttle, A. H., "Nathan Bangs." Eaton & Mains, New York, Jennings and Graham, Cincinnati, n. d. (Copyright 1909.) Chapter X. gives a modern estimate of his relation to the slavery controversy. Tuttle thinks him wrong in favoring the moderates.

Tyerman, L., "The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.," Founder of the Methodists. With an appendix by Abel Stevens, LL. D. 3 vols. Harpers, New York, 1872.

Tyerman, L., "The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield...." 2 vols. New York, 1877.

Wightman, William M., "Life of William Capers, D. D. One of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Including an Autobiography." Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, Tenn., 1896. He was a prominent figure in the controversies of 1844. A serviceable book.

#### 4. SPECIAL PHASES OF THE SLAVERY CONTROVERSY IN THE CHURCH

Adams, Alice Dana, "The Neglected Period of Anti-slavery in America (1808-1831)." Ginn & Co., Boston and London, 1908. Radcliffe College Monographs No. 14. A careful and useful study of an important and little worked period.

Ambler, Charles H., "Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776-1861." University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1910. A sane and careful piece of work.

Armstrong, James E., "History of the Old Baltimore Conference from the Planting of Methodism in 1773 to the Division of the Conference in 1857." Baltimore, 1907. Illustrates well the conservative position of the conference during the troubles of 1844.

Atkinson, J., "Memorials of Methodism in New Jersey." Carlton & Porter, New York, 1860.

Barclay, W. F., "Constitution of American Episcopal Methodism." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1902.

Barnes, Albert, "An Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery," 1846. One of the most powerful refutations of the scriptural arguments for slavery.

Bascom, Henry B., Green, A. L. P., Parsons, C. B. (southern commissioners for the settlement of the property question between the two churches), "Brief Appeal to Public Opinion, in a Series of Exceptions to the Course and Action of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1844 to 1848, Affecting the Rights and Interests of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Published by John Early, Agent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Louisville, Ky., 1848. A criticism of the course of the Methodist Episcopal Church respecting the new church during the first three years of its existence. Very important; valuable appendix; keenly critical, severe, heated.

Bascom, Henry B., "Methodism and Slavery." Hodges, Todd and Pruett, Frankfort, Ky., 1845.

Buckley, James M., "Constitutional and Parliamentary History of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Methodist Book Concern, New York, 1909. The best work on the subject.

Clarke, J. F., "Anti-Slavery Days." New York, 1883. Picture of agitations in Boston.

Conable, F. W., "History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1810-1872." Nelson and Phillips, New York, 1876. There are a few references to the slavery conflict in that conference.

"Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Constitutions and Charters of the Several Organizations Authorized by the General Conference, to which is added the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Methodist Book Concern, New York.

Cook, J. R., "The Judicial Decisions of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church." An Introduction by James M. Buckley. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Jennings and Graham, Cincinnati; Eaton & Mains, New York, n. d., (copyright 1903), but revisions include decisions made in 1904 and in 1908. An appendix gives the present organic law of the church.

Culver, Newell, "Methodism Forty Years Ago and Now...." Nelson and Phillips, New York, 1873.

Curts, Lewis (editor), "The General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church from 1792-1896. Prepared by a literary staff under the supervision of Mr. Curts. Curts & Jennings, Cincinnati and New York, 1900. Discusses border Methodism.

Elliott, Charles, "History of the Great Secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the year 1845, Eventuating in the Organization of the New Church Entitled the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Swormstedt & Poe, Cincinnati, 1855. A work of great importance for any student of the schism. Contains 1118 columns of closely printed matter. Based chiefly on newspapers, being extracts from them with a running commentary. Dr. Elliott also used many other important sources. As an appendix there are 78 important documents referring to the schism. As Dr. Elliott was a prime participant in the events he describes, his work is in reality itself a source. He adopts the point of view of strong opposition both to the abolitionists and to the pro-slavery South.

Emory, Robert, "History of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church." New York, 1845. A very good discussion of the Discipline and its change to the date of the schism.

Finley, James B., "Sketches of Western Methodism: Biographical, Historical and Miscellaneous." Edited by W. P. Strickland. Methodist Book Concern, Cincinnati, 1854. A fine account of frontier life.



Flood, Theodore L., and Hamilton, John W. (editors), "Lives of Methodist Bishops." Phillips and Hunt, New York, 1882.

Foster, Randolph S., "Union of Episcopal Methodisms." Hunt and Eaton, New York, Cranston & Curts, Cincinnati, 1892. A northern plea for reunion of northern and southern Methodisms. Favors reunion rather than federation.

Fuller, Erasmus Q., "An Appeal to the Records: a Vindication of the Methodist Episcopal Church in its Policy and Proceedings Toward the South." Hitchcock & Walden, Cincinnati, Nelson & Phillips, New York, 1876. A review and indictment of Myers, "Disruption," and almost as cutting, as bitter and as sarcastic, as Myers. Painful reading, yet it includes much matter drawn from the records. Accuses Myers of wilful misrepresentation.

Gorrie, P. Douglas, "Episcopal Methodism as it was and is or an Account of the Origin, Progress, Doctrines, Church Polity, Usages, Institutions and Statistics of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States...." Miller, Orton and Mulligan, Auburn and Buffalo, 1854.

Goss, C. C., "Statistical History of the First Century of American Methodism: with a Summary of the Origin and Present Operations of Other Denominations." Carlton & Porter, New York, 1866. It gives general statistical summaries of preachers and members by annual conferences to 1791; the General Conference, 1792 to 1864; and then it gives a detailed statistical description of Methodism in that year and a comparison with other denominations. Brief historical accounts are included in the earlier parts.

Hall, Barnes M., "Life of Rev. John Clark." With an introduction by Bishop Morris. New York, 1857. Interesting side lights on the missionary to the Indians of those days. Clark was the only southern delegate to vote with the North on the Andrew case.

Harris, William L., "The Constitutional Powers of the General Conference, with Special Application to the Subject of Slaveholding." Cincinnati, 1860.

Harrison, William P., "Methodist Union, Threatened in 1844, was Formally Dissolved in 1848...." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1892. A southern resumé of the story of the schism with reference to closer relations again between the two parts of Episcopal Methodism.

"History of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South;" comprehending all the official proceedings of the General Conference; the southern annual conferences and the General Convention; with such other matters as are necessary to a right understanding of the case. Compiled and published by the editors and publishers of "The Southwestern Christian Advocate," for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by order of the Louisville Convention. William Cameron, Printer, Nashville, 1845. (Reviewed in "Methodist Quarterly Review,," vol. XXXI. 1849, 282 ff. See also "Ibid.," XXXIII. 396) Very important.

Kerley, T. A., "Conference Rights; or Governing Principles of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as Found in the History, Legislation, and Administration of the Church." (Edited by John J. Tigert). Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, 1898. Contains a chapter (VII.) on the constitutionality of the Plan of Separation. Southern in outlook, but calm and fair.

"The Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church: What it is, and where to be found and how it may be amended, as seen by a layman." Hunt and Eaton. New York, 1894.

Leftwich, W. M., "Martyrdom in Missouri. A History of Religious Proscription, the Seizure of Churches, and the Persecution of Ministers of the Gospel in the State of Missouri, During the Late Civil War, and under the 'Test Oath' of the New Constitution." 2 vols. Southwestern Book and Publishing Co., St. Louis, printed for the author, 1870. It contains a brief resumé of the separation of 1844-45, from a strongly partisan southern point of view. It treats also in the same spirit the relations of the two Methodisms, and the political animus of the same after 1845; and the claims and counterclaims with respect to local church property before and during the Civil War. Its chief *raison d'être* is its discussion of the martyrdoms of ministers in that state.

Locke, Mary S., "Anti-Slavery in America from the Introduction of the African Slaves to the Prohibition of the Slave Trade, (1619-1808)." Ginn & Co., Boston, 1901. A careful and suggestive study of a little worked field.

MacDonald, William, "History of Methodism in Providence, R. I., 1787-1867." Phillips and Prido, Boston, 1868.

Matlack, Lucius C., "The Anti-Slavery Struggle and Triumph in the Methodist Episcopal Church." With an introduction by Rev. D. D. Whedon, D. D. Phillips and Hunt, New York, Walden & Stowe, Cincinnati, 1881. A valuable account of the slavery struggle in the church by one who went through it, seceded from the church with others and formed the Wesleyan Church. He later returned to the original fold, becoming one of the historians of the conflict.

Matlack, Lucius C., "The History of American Slavery and Methodism from 1780 to 1849; and History of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America." In two parts with an appendix. New York, 1849. Another work written earlier than "The Anti-slavery Struggle" and therefore lacking in the calmness and finish of the later book. Both embody much original material and are valuable to the student of this schism. Sometimes inaccurate in detail.

McFerrin, John B., "History of Methodism in Tennessee, 1783-1840." 3 vols. Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1869-73.

Merrill, Stephen, "The Organic Union of American Methodism." Methodist Book Concern, Cincinnati, 1892. Favors closer union.

Mood, F. A., "Methodism in Charleston." A narrative of the chief events relating to the rise and progress of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S. C. Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1855, second edition 1875.

Mudge, James, "History of the New England Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1796-1910." Boston, 1910. Gives a full account of the Wesleyan secession of 1842-1843.

Myers, Edward H., "The Disruption of the Methodist Episcopal Church 1844-1846; Comprising a Thirty Years' History of the Relations of the two Methodisms." With an introduction by T. O. Summers, D. D. Nashville, Tenn., Macon, Ga., 1875. A strong but very bitter and partisan statement of the southern side of the old conflict in view of the overtures for reunion in 1872.

Neely, Thomas B., "History of the Governing Conference in Methodism." Cranston & Stowe, Cincinnati, 1893.

Peterson, P. A., "History of the Revisions of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1889. Covers the disciplinary changes in the southern church since 1844. Planned on much the same lines as Emory and Sherman.

Redford, A. H., "History of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1879. (Copyright 1871.) Consists of very complete accounts in the words of the official reports of the General Conference of 1844, meeting of the southern delegates at New York, the Louisville convention of 1845, the first General Conference of the Church, South, and the property question. The appendices contain (a) list of delegates to the Conference of 1844, (b) action of the southern conferences in regard to the division of the church, (c) correspondence concerning union, (d) decision of the Supreme Court of the United States on the property question.

Sherman, David, "History of the Revisions of the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal church." (Third edition). Hunt and Eaton, New York, 1890.

Shipp, Albert M., "The History of Methodism in South Carolina." Southern Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1883.

Smith, George G., "The History of Methodism in Georgia and Florida, from 1785 to 1865." Jno. W. Burke & Co., Macon, Ga., 1877. Much brief biographical material. Not as fair-minded an account as is found in his later works.

Sweet, William W., "Methodist Church Influence in Southern Politics." Reprinted from "The Mississippi Valley Historical Review," March, 1915. Vol. I. 546-560. Discusses border troubles.

Thrall, Homer S., "History of Methodism in Texas." Houston, 1872.

Tigert, John J., "A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism." Second edition revised and enlarged. Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Nashville, Tenn., 1904. An able and important work. Full discussion of the schism from a modern view point. Southern, but generally fair in tone.

Wakeley, J. B., "Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism." Published for the Author. Carlton & Porter, New York, 1858.

Weeks, S. B., "Anti-slavery Sentiment in the South," with published letters from J. S. Mill and Mrs. Stowe. In Southern Historical Society, Publications, vol. II. Washington, 1898.

Whitlock, W. F., "The Story of the Book Concerns." Jennings and Pye, Cincinnati, Eaton & Mains, New York, n. d. (Copyright 1903.) A handy little manual of the Book Concerns, and of the periodical press of the church, including very brief biographies of the agents. Not always accurate in detail.

Wilder, C. W., "New England Annual Conferences Against Slavery and Caste." New England Historical Society, Proceedings, January 16, 1893.

## 5. PERIODICAL LITERATURE

"The American Wesleyan Observer." Issued weekly, January 1 to September 5, 1840. Horton and Scott, editors. Full report of the proceedings of the General Conference of 1840. Lucius C. Matlack edited it while the others were away. It was published at Lowell, Mass.

"The Christian Advocate and Journal." The chief organ of Episcopal Methodism on this continent. Founded Sept. 9, 1826, at New York. Merged with "The Missionary Journal" of Charleston, N. C., 1827, and the name "and Journal" added; purchased "The Zion's Herald" in 1829 and "Zion's Herald" added to the name, which was dropped again in 1833. The "and Journal" was dropped in 1870. The editors were: Nathan Bangs 1828-32, J. P. Durbin 1832-36, S. Luckey 1836-40, Thomas E. Bond 1840-48, George Peck 1848-52, Bond 1852-56, Abel Stevens 1856-60. Bitterly anti-southern during the troubles of 1836-1854.

"The Lynchburg Republican," Lynchburg, Va., 1845-1848. Important for the border conflict.

"The Maysville Eagle." Maysville, Ky., 1844-1848, especially 1847.

"The Methodist Quarterly Review." Called "The Methodist Review" since 1879. Founded 1818, edited by the Book Agents at New York until 1832, by Nathan Bangs from 1832 to 1836, by S. Luckey to 1840, by George Peck 1840-48, by McClintock 1848-56. Several notable articles on the schism.

"The New England Christian Advocate," Lowell, Mass. Luther Lee (anti-slavery) editor. First issue dated Jan. 7, 1841, but really issued in December, 1840. Continued only one year.

"The New York Tribune." Founded in 1841. Some news notes on the schism and incidents growing out of it.

"Niles' Register." 76 volumes, 1811-49. News items and extracts from other papers.

"The Northern Christian Advocate." Published then at Auburn, N. Y. The editors were: Rounds (very moderate in his views on the schism) 1844-48; W. Hosmer 1848-52; Hibbard 1852-60.

"The Philanthropist." Birney and Bailey, editors. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1836-47.

"The Pittsburgh Christian Advocate." Pittsburgh, Pa. Editor Hunter was one of the most moderate of the editors among the Methodists during the bitter conflict that ended in division.

"The Richmond Christian Advocate." Edited during the controversy, at Richmond, Va., by Luther M. Lee, a strong and outspoken partisan of the southern cause. One of the most important papers of the period as a source.

"The Southern Christian Advocate." Edited during the schism at Charleston, S. C., by Rev. William M. Wightman. It was a strong advocate of the section in which it was published. Very useful.

"The Southwestern Christian Advocate." Edited by John B. McFerrin, at Nashville, Tenn. In 1846 its name was changed to "The Nashville Christian Advocate." True to its section during the division.

"The True Wesleyan." Organ of the Wesleyan seceders, edited by Horton and Scott, Nov. 1842.

"The Western Christian Advocate." Established in 1834 at Cincinnati, Ohio. The editors were: T. A. Morris 1834-36, Charles Elliott 1836-48, Matthew Simpson 1848-52, Elliott 1852-56. Dr. Elliott favored the northern cause, but changed his mind on a number of minor questions. He detested the

abolitionists and the southern seceders, as he called them. The paper is a very useful source.

"The Zion's Herald." Established in 1823 by an association of New England Methodists. Sold out to "The Christian Advocate and Journal," in 1829. Reestablished in 1833, and continued in semi-official relations with the church. Barker Badger was the first editor. In January, 1835, it was formally opened to the anti-slavery discussion. During part of the controversy it was edited by Abel Stevens. Published in Boston.

"The Zion's Watchman." An anti-slavery paper published by LaRoy Sunderland in New York City. Founded in 1836. Backed by an association of Methodists. The first organ of the radical abolitionists within the Methodist Church.

## 6. CHURCH DOCUMENTS

"The Debates at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church," May, 1844. To which is added a review of the proceedings of the said Conference, by Rev. Luther Lee and Rev. E. Smith, New York, 1845. Reported for "The True Wesleyan." The thesis of the reviews was that the church had not been converted to abolitionism. Reviews reflect the abolitionist bias of the authors.

"The Discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America." Boston, 1843.

"The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church." 1785 to the present time. Earlier editions very rare. Few full sets in existence.

"The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." Louisville, Ky., 1846, and later editions.

Elliott, Charles, "Historical Scrap Book." Vols. I. IV. VI. VIII. These consist of clippings from the Methodist Episcopal Church periodicals relating to the schism. They are well bound and were "Presented to the Western Book Concern of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Jan. 1, 1856, By Charles Elliott," the compiler. He got these materials together for his immense work "The Great Secession." There were originally eight volumes but the others were destroyed by a fire at the Cincinnati publishing house. They are a mine of handy information, especially useful to those who are unable to see all the newspapers.

"Journals of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church." From 1792 to the present time. Vol. II. contains the minutes of 1840 and 1844 and the debates of 1844. Carlton and Lanahan, New York, n. d.

"Journals of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." From 1846 to the present time.

"A Journal of the New England Conference." Manuscript minutes or journal of the New England annual conference, long in the possession of the venerable Dr. Mudge, for so many years secretary of the conference. Two well-preserved volumes for the years 1822-1835, and 1836-1848 are useful for the period covered by the present work. The chirography is surprisingly legible.

"The Methodist Church Case, at Maysville, Kentucky." By Henry Waller, counsel for the complainants, and Francis T. Hood, and Richard H. Stanton, counsel for defendants. The Eagle Office, Maysville, 1848. Records are given of the pleadings on each side, testimony in the chancery suit in Mason Circuit Court, arguments of counsel, decisions of the Circuit Judge and the opinion of the Court of Appeals. Very useful and well authenticated source, on an important and influential local property case. (Gibson vs. Armstrong, 7 "Ben Monroe," 481.)

"The Methodist Church Property Case." (Ohio.) Arguments of Messrs. Riddle, Lane, and Ewing, counsel for the defendants, in the suit of William A. Smith, and others, vs. LeRoy Swarmstedt, and others, heard before Hon. Judge H. H. Leavitt, in the Circuit Court of the United States for the district of Ohio, June 27-July 2, 1852, with the decision of the Judge. Swarmstedt & Poe, Cincinnati, 1852. (5 "McLean," 369; Federal Cases No. 13,112.) Judge Leavitt's decision favoring the northern contention was reversed by the United States Supreme Court in 1853. (57 U. S., 288.)

"Minutes of the Annual Conferences." (Original Pamphlet Minutes, known as Local Minutes.) Few conferences published them in the early days. They include resolutions and miscellaneous acts of the conferences. The full minutes, however, were seldom published, and they contain very little controversial material as published.

"Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church." (Known as the General Minutes.) For the years 1773-1828, vol. I. New York, 1840; vol. II. for the



years 1829 to 1839, New York, 1840; vol. III. for the years 1839 to 1845, New York, 1846; vol. IV. for the years 1846 to 1851, New York, 1854. Mostly statistical and biographical; occasionally contain resolutions passed by the conferences.

"Minutes of Several Conversations Between the Methodist Preachers in the Connexion Established by the Late Reverend John Wesley, A. M.," at their ninety-second Annual Conference begun in Sheffield on Wednesday, July 29, 1835. Third edition, London, 1835.

Sutton, R., "The Methodist Church Property Case." *Bascom and others vs. Lane and others.* Lane & Scott, New York, 1851. (Federal Cases, No. 1089.)

## 7. PAMPHLETS

Most of these pamphlets are found in the collection made by Rev. Samuel J. May, the noted abolitionist, and now owned by the Cornell University Library. It is a valuable collection preserving a vast amount of fugitive material which would otherwise have been lost to the historian. No student of any phase of the slavery question can afford to ignore this rich store of materials.

An American [J. G. Birney,] "American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery." Third American edition enlarged by an appendix. C. Whipple, Newburyport, 1842. Deals with the pro-slavery side of the controversy in the Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist Protestant churches, while a supplement considers briefly the attitude of the Quakers, Congregationalists and some others.

Bourne, George, "Man-stealing and Slavery Denounced by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches together with An Address to all the churches." Pp. 19. Boston, 1834. Some good material on the early attitude of the Methodist Episcopal and Presbyterian churches on slavery.

Bowen, C. W., "Arthur and Lewis Tappan." A paper read at the fiftieth anniversary of the New York City Anti-slavery Society at the Broadway Tabernacle. Pp. 16. New York, Oct. 2, 1883. Brief account of the early anti-slavery days, the formation of the anti-slavery societies, etc.

Brownlow, William G., "A Sermon on Slavery." A Vindication of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; her position stated. Delivered in Temperance Hall, Knoxville, on

Sabbath, August 9, 1857, to the delegates and others in attendance at the Southern Commercial Convention, Knoxville, Tenn., 1857. A typical array of southern pro-slavery views.

Caldwell, John H., "Slavery and Southern Methodism." Two sermons preached in the Methodist Church in Newman [Newnan], Georgia, by the Pastor. Pp. 80. Printed for the author, 1865. A criticism by a southerner of the slave power. The author attempts to connect Calhoun with ecclesiastical division as a prologue to political secession. Made some little stir at the time.

"Constitution of the New England Anti-Slavery Society:" with an Address to the public. Pp. 16. Garrison & Knapp, Boston, 1832.

"Debate on 'Modern Abolitionism' in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church," held in Cincinnati, May, 1836, with notes. Pp. 91. Published for the Ohio Anti-slavery Society, Cincinnati, 1836. Taken from "The Philanthropist" in part, and in part being the work of Orange Scott.

DeVinne, Daniel, "The Methodist Episcopal Church and Slavery. A Historical Survey of the Relations of the Early Methodists to Slavery." Pp. 95. New York, 1857. Relates mostly to the period before 1800. A valuable study.

Dixon, James, "Methodism in America: with the Personal Narrative of the Author during a Tour Through a Part of the United States and Canada." Second edition, London, 1849.

Henning, Thomas, "Slavery in the Churches, Religious Societies, etc.: A Review." Pp. 39. Toronto, 1856. States the early attitude of the churches, missionary societies and boards toward slavery

Jay, William, "Letter on the Reasons assigned by the American Tract Society for its silence in regard to American Slavery." Pp. 28. New York, 1853.

Lame, J. S., "Maryland Slavery and Maryland Chivalry." Philadelphia.

Latta, S. A., "Constitutional Claims and Powers of Methodist Episcopacy:" being a review of the discussions of the late General Conference, and an appeal to the North and South in favor of union. Pp. 43. Cincinnati, 1844. Really a review of Bishop Hamline's General Conference speech from the southern view point.

Matlack, Lucius C., "Narrative of the Anti-Slavery Experiences of a Minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, who was Twice Rejected by the Philadelphia Annual Conference and Finally Deprived of License to Preach for Being an Abolitionist." Pp. 24. Philadelphia, 1845. An important document taking one close to the personal problems that faced the abolitionists in the church.

Mattison, H., "The Impending Crisis of 1860; or the Present Connection of the Methodist Episcopal Church with Slavery, and Our Duty in Regard to it." Pp. 136. New York, 1859. This pamphlet contains much good material on the history of slavery in the church from 1739 to 1859.

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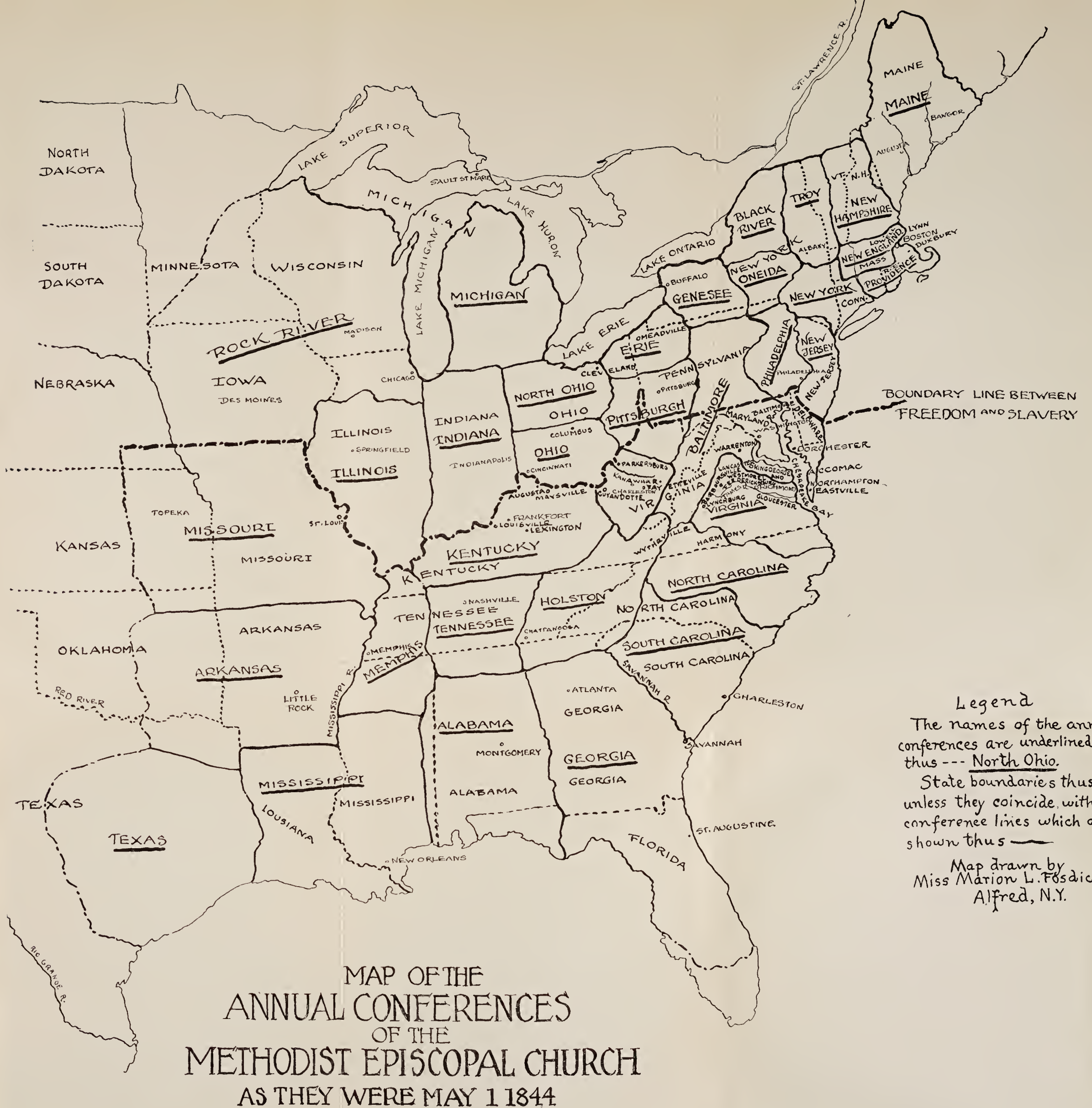
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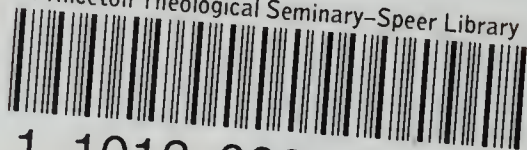
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